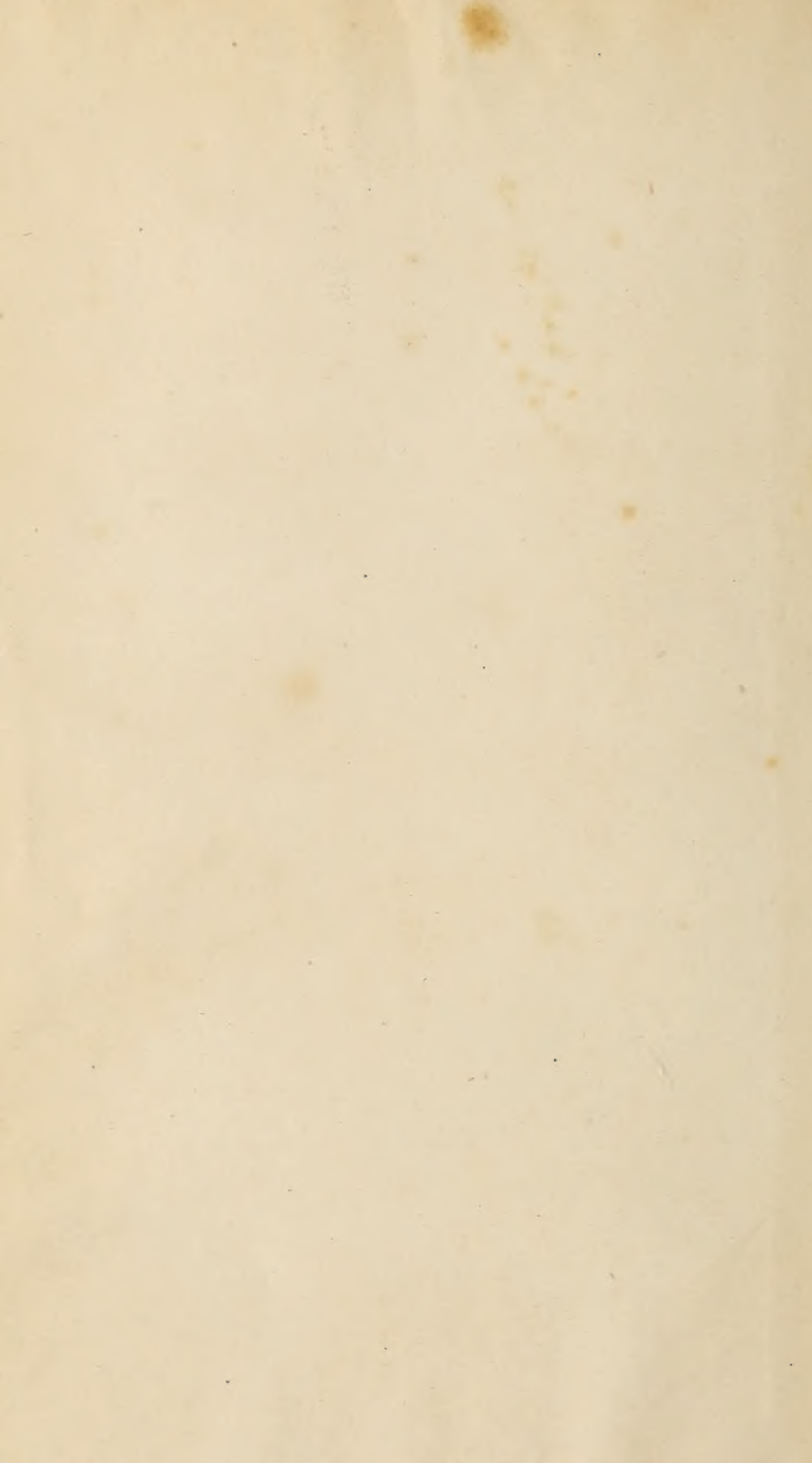




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OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

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ON ST. MATTHEW, CHAPTER V. VERSES 13, 14.

—“YE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH:—YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.”

OUR Saviour explains, elsewhere, in what sense he uses the metaphor of salt. “Salt is good,” says he; “but if it has lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?—it is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill.” These words imply, that salt was sometimes used simply by itself for manure; and sometimes as an ingredient, with other substances. “It is neither fit for the land,” implies the former use of it; “nor yet for the dunghill,” the latter: for to say, it was not fit for the land, was equivalent to saying it was not proper to be used by itself for manure; to say it was not fit for the dunghill, as clearly meant, that it **was** useless, even as a co-ingredient.

Thus, then, on our Lord's own authority, we must conceive his words, “Ye are the salt of the earth,” to mean, that those of whom he spoke were to act upon mankind as a powerful manure acts upon the arable glebe; that is, that, through their influence, the human soil, which had hitherto been sterile of all virtue, should produce the fruits of evangelic righteousness; and thereby serve the wise and benevolent purpose of its Divine Creator.

But it is remarkable, that our Lord represents the agents of his great design by another no less

significant emblem,—“Ye,” says he, “are the light of the world.”

These words, even at first view, present a nobler, and more comprehensive idea, than those which went before. The first figure refers to a most important exercise of human industry, by which the prime necessity of man is supplied. Until this expedient has come into operation, human society, if it can yet be so called, has not even the substance of animal comfort. This is first ensured by the labours of husbandry; from which alone man obtains the means of regular sustenance. Still this commencement of human happiness is low and imperfect, in comparison of those progressive attainments which proceed from this humble beginning. All these, however, from the first step beyond the simple aliment of life, to the utmost height of intellectual and moral elevation upon earth, are summarily brought before us, in that comprehensive, though simple term, “the light of the world.” The contrast, therefore, deserves, in the first instance, to be attended to. The salt of the earth; the light of the world: earth, the more passive, yet productive clod; world, the entire system of enlarged activity, elevated pursuit, and valuable attainment. Every thing, in fact, which advances upon what is called the state of nature, and embellishes or enhances human life, is necessarily comprehended in this contradistinguished use of the term world.

In declaring, therefore, his disciples to be the salt of the earth, our Saviour said much. He declares them, as raising human nature from a

worthless and wretched condition, to a state of intrinsic value, and substantial comfort. He supposes a fertilising admixture, by which the human soil is fitted to produce those fruits of righteousness, of which, till then, it had been incapable; and, consequently, he ascribes to his gospel, even in this, its first and simplest operation, the power of rescuing man from the low state into which he had fallen, and of enduing him with the substance of rectitude and peace.

But, in declaring his disciples to be also the light of the world, he not only invests them with a higher dignity, but he intimates the illimitable extent of their beneficial influence; representing them as a constellation of luminaries in the intellectual hemisphere, which should shine so effulgently with his reflected radiance, as to afford a new direction, diffuse a new influence, and place all things in a more beneficial as well as beautifying light, than had been ever before conceived, or than could have arisen from any other conceivable source.

It is impossible, however, by any estimate of this higher representation, to depreciate the blessing signified by the first of the two allusions. Let man be ever so advanced on the intellectual scale, he never rises above his need of that aliment which is supplied by the cultivated earth: just so, there is a simple vitality of evangelic religion, which is alike indispensable for the peasant and philosopher; and which the gracious Redeemer, by his wise dispensations, has made equally attainable, by the one and by the other. But this primary blessing,

though ever to be valued and guarded, as, in the truest and deepest sense, the life of the human spirit, is, nevertheless, but an elementary blessing, in comparison of those consequential attainments of which it forms the basis, and for the pursuit of which it alone gives the capacity.

As it, therefore, appears to be with relation to this first and lowest, yet indispensable and invaluable benefit, that our Lord calls his disciples the salt of the earth; so it is no less clear, that he denominates them the light of the world, on account of those higher influences which Christianity was fitted to diffuse; and by means of which, not only human life itself, but every providential blessing by which life is cheered and enhanced, derives a new brightness, like that which the otherwise unenlightened planets receive from the sun.

That Christianity, rightly understood, and applied to its extent of efficacy, teems with these happy consequences, is so obvious, as to supersede proof. Can we, therefore, doubt, that He, who himself formed, and continues to conduct, the entire machinery of providence, meant, in this short but beautiful aphorism, to assert the perfect correspondence of the gospel dispensation to all the antecedent, and, in fact, subordinate, arrangements of his inscrutable wisdom?

That Christianity possesses lower and higher influences, is no dream of a speculative fancy. St. Paul has expressly declared, that, in preaching to the Corinthians, he communicated to them the testimony only, but strictly withheld from them the mystery, of God. He delivered to them those

elementary truths, without which they could not have become Christians: but he informs them, that there were treasures of sublimer knowledge, for the communication of which they were yet unprepared. "We speak wisdom," says he, "among them that are perfect."

In initiating the Corinthians, then, did not St. Paul act specially as the salt of the earth? and when he communicated to prepared minds the mysterious wisdom, of which the effect generally was so bright as to dazzle the mental eye of those who were yet babes in Christ, did he not substantially come within our blessed Lord's significant description, "Ye are the light of the world?"

But may we not suppose, that, however justly these two figures respectively correspond to the elementary initiation, and more perfect instruction of the same individual Christians, they may also denote a twofold mode of training, which may, from the first commencement, be required by two different orders of mind? It is obvious that, by the laws of nature, all minds are not cast in the same mould: some minds are so formed, as to be impressible only through the medium of their animal nature: they are interested by nothing, except it strike upon their external senses, or excite their animal passions: while other minds have a faculty of apprehending and acting, in some sort, by their own innate power; and, instead of being subjugated by the external senses, use these as the ministers only of their loftier and more intellectual occupations. Nothing, in point of fact, is more

evident, than this twofold character of the human mind; the gravitation of some toward the nature of inferior animals; the culmination of others, as it were, toward those higher intelligences who inhabit the invisible world: and, as this variety is indisputably of divine appointment, would it not be reasonable to suppose that some answerable provision should have been made, in such a scheme of divine beneficence as that of the Gospel,—a scheme so exquisite in its construction, and so universal in its purpose?

In the view, then, of this undeniable distinction of minds, can we hesitate to conclude, that, in proportion as teachers of Christianity should correspond to one or other of the two figures used by our Redeemer, a greater fitness would seem to be implied for operating successfully upon the one or the other of the two classes of human society; that the mechanical stimulancy, intimated in the first of the two figures, would be best adapted to those in whom animality predominated; and that the more intellectual exhibition, implied in the latter figure, would not less correspond to those, whose motives of conduct operate, through their reason, their mental tastes, and the affections of their hearts?

It is worthy of remark, that our Redeemer has, elsewhere, distinctly and most significantly recognised the two orders of mind now adverted to. He has supposed the men of that generation, with whom he had intercourse on earth, to be either such as were capable of being attracted by what was desirable, or such as needed to be propelled by

what was terrible ; and, in correspondence to these different species of sensibility, he describes himself as possessing, infinitely, matter of attraction for the one, and matter of terror for the other. He illustrates the justness of his complaint by the examples of the Ninevites, who repented at the preaching of Jonah ; and the Queen of the South, who went from a distant land, to hear the wisdom of Solomon. That there might be minds in which these opposite feelings might be blended, is most true ; but it is even more true, that the predominance of the one or other set of feelings, is that which most simply and strictly characterises the two prevalent orders of mind : the lower order being that which requires to be propelled, in all great instances, by the dread of evil ; the higher order being that which, from better tastes, and more enlarged views, is open to the attraction of what is estimable and amiable.

Can we question, then, that our Lord had directly in his view those two specimens of mental character, when he uttered that twofold expostulation ? Have not his expressions this import, that, whether the men of that generation were naturally gross, or naturally intelligent, — whether their minds were in a state of highest refinement, or lowest brutality, they were alike inexcusable ; since He, who was at once the power and the wisdom of God, possessed attractions beyond all that had ever been exhibited, and terrors beyond all that had ever been denounced, upon earth ; that he rose infinitely, in the one respect, above all that the Queen of the South had conceived of Solomon ;

and, in the other, above all that Jonah had preached to the Ninevites?

Understanding our Lord, then, in this only possible way, can we overlook the obvious correspondence between the twofold distinction of minds to be wrought upon, and the twofold apparatus for effecting the necessary work? Is it not evident, that a poignancy of address, resembling that of salt, would be best adapted to minds like those of the Ninevites; while an attractiveness, like that of light, would be more suitable to those higher spirits which corresponded to the Queen of the South?

Although, therefore, it may be well conceived, that individuals should be found competent to both purposes; like St. Paul, who could adapt himself both to Greeks and barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise; still it would seem more consonant to the principle of distribution on which, according to St. Paul, offices are arranged and gifts bestowed, that those two modes of operation should be severally provided for; and that a twofold agency should exist, corresponding to the twofold exigence.

May we not presume to think, that this principle had place in the twofold, yet coexisting, discipleship of our Redeemer and the Baptist? Nothing could be more poignant than the teaching of John; nothing more replete with celestial sunshine, than the discourses of our blessed Saviour. But it is impossible to overlook the strictly analogous distinction, made by our Lord himself, between his own instructions and those of the

Baptist; when he compares those of the latter to mourning and weeping, and those delivered by himself to piping and dancing. Who does not see, that both instances similarly suppose a higher and a lower method of promoting the same general end? Our Lord's expostulation evidently implies, that, whatever might be the habit of mind, whether it would be best wrought upon by a more mechanical or a more liberal process; whether it was more susceptible of hope or fear, of attractive or propulsive motives,—the twofold teaching of our Redeemer and the Baptist, afforded two modes of institution so dissimilar in their operation, yet so identical in their tendency, as, within their joint extent, to furnish fit means for every sort and condition of human nature to attain the ultimate good for which man was created.

It is too plain to need proof, that this variety of provision is not only supposed in our Saviour's complaint, but forms the aggravating consideration upon which it is founded. He represents them as inexcusable, on this very ground, that, whatever might be their difference of natural temper, either in John's ministry or in his, each temper might have found appropriate accommodation. There was, then, a fitness in such diversity of provision, else it would not have been employed. But if it was adopted from natural fitness, then would it afterward be relinquished? Would it not, on the contrary, from the same natural fitness, be still retained in substance, however it might be circumstantially altered, in conformity to successive changes in the world and in the church? But, if

we are warranted to form this supposition, we have additional ground for concluding, that, in the two distinct emblems of salt and light, our Saviour meant to characterise two corresponding species of evangelical ministration; which, in the subsequent course of things, would be respectively demanded by the diversity of human character and habit.

But this twofold agency would seem to be expedient for a further, and certainly not less important, reason. The mystical kingdom of Christ was to receive subjects in two ways; that of conversion, and that of education. Adults were to be converted and become as little children; but little children themselves were not to be converted, but to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Here, then, obviously, are two modes of Christian institution, pointing to the same end, but necessarily differing from each other in numberless circumstances. Were there, therefore, no other necessity for such a quality of provision as those two significant figures denote, the different exigencies of adult and infant subjects would account for and elucidate such an arrangement. For, where an adult sinner is to be reclaimed, the means must be pungent, as well as penetrating. In such a case, the axe of the Baptist must be laid to the root of the tree, before it can be expected that the beatitudes of our Redeemer should be valued, or attended to. But the mind of the child in which no depraved habit has yet been added to natural frailty, is to be won by attraction, rather than to be excited by pungency. "Light," we know, "is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold

the sun." If, therefore, there be, indeed, two methods of communicating the influences of the Gospel; the one of which acts, as it were, by physical stimulation; and the other, by at once exciting delight and engaging affection; can it be questioned that the latter, and not the former, corresponds to the case of children? The Redeemer, who so remarkably invited children to come to him, was himself, supremely, "the true light." That form, therefore, of the Christian character, which most perfectly reflects this light, will be likeliest to endear Christ's mystical kingdom to its infant subjects. When our Redeemer declared the peculiar fitness of little children for his kingdom, it followed by implication, that his kingdom was peculiarly fit for little children. We might, therefore, naturally suppose, that an explanation of this special fitness would somewhere occur; and could it have been more substantially given than in that one comprehensive sentence,—“Ye are the light of the world?” Christianity, to be the light of the world, must be naturally, as well as supernaturally, engaging: it must be as cheerful as it is luminous; not only pure, but sublime; beautiful itself, and adding fresh beauty to all which it irradiates. Such are the properties of the natural sun, which is evidently the emblem to which our Lord would, in this place, direct attention: and who, therefore, can doubt, that analogous moral properties exist infinitely in the Sun of righteousness; and derivatively in those who are qualified to reflect his brightness? These, therefore, must be the only suitable instruments for attracting the tastes, and pre-occupying

the affections of young minds ; for in such instances only, is St. Paul's wise direction likely to be obeyed, —“And ye parents, provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged.” The Apostle's principle, therefore, equally applies to whatever would damp or repel : and it consequently asserts the necessity of that very encouragement, which can be afforded by such only as are indeed the light of the world.

ON THE LEADING DESIGN OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION, AS EXHIBITED IN THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

THE Epistle to the Romans is deservedly considered as a profound explication of the primary principles of evangelical doctrine; and it has accordingly employed the studies of commentators and theological students.

It seems, however, a question yet unsettled, whether, in this elaborate discourse, the Apostle means to represent the leading design of the Christian dispensation, as a mysterious provision for the acquittal of believers in Christ from legal condemnation, or for their deliverance from moral thralldom, and their purification from moral pollution.

It must be observed that those who insist on the former view, do not wholly exclude the latter view. The question, therefore, does not extend to the entire object of the Epistle, but rather to its primary purpose; in other words, whether the Apostle, in the first eight chapters, contemplates the legal guilt of human beings, as involved in the crime of their first parents; or the moral thralldom by which, with comparatively few exceptions, they had become, through wicked works, miserable in themselves, and enemies to God. And, consequently, whether the remedial grace of the Gospel, on which the Apostle dwells, is represented by him

as immediately referring to the one exigence or to the other.

The opinion of modern theologists is generally in favour of the first supposition; but it is, at least, possible to adduce several reasons in support of the other.

These reasons are either negative or positive.

The first negative reason is, that St. Paul lays the foundation of his doctrinal statement, not in the universal condemnation of the human race through Adam's fall, but in the general and increasing depravity of his descendants. And his enumeration of corrupt tempers and practices serves conclusively to shew the need of some effectual moral corrective, but would not have been necessary to his purpose, had the legal guilt of all, without exception, and an adequate provision for forensic acquittal, been the leading objects in his view.

But it may be asked, has not the Apostle proved the design of his detail to be the establishment of universal condemnation, by himself concluding from it, that "every mouth was stopped, and all the world become guilty before God?"

Such, certainly, are the Apostle's words: but his "every mouth," and "all the world," if closely examined, will be found to assert, merely, that the Jews, no less than the Gentiles, were chargeable with general depravity. The passages which St. Paul quotes from the Old Testament to prove the depraved condition of the Jews, however unlimited in expression, must necessarily be understood as describing what was general, but not what was

universal, because there never was a time in which amongst his own people God left himself wholly without witness. Besides, to suit the Apostle's purpose, it was necessary that those charges should even then be, in substance, applicable to the state of the Jews ; yet we know from the evangelic history, that, low as the moral state of the Jews was when our Lord appeared among them, there were, nevertheless, some who had the fear of God before their eyes, and were devoutly waiting for his kingdom. We must, therefore, in common reason, place a certain limit to these terms, however, apparently unlimited. We must, in truth and consistency, regard them as describing a general, not a strictly universal state of things. And be it observed, also, that they speak only of practical corruption, and of what the Jews had "become" by wilful degeneracy ; they describe a miserable state of society ; but they say nothing (however true the fact) of innate proclivity ; and still less do they imply that every Jew whatever shared in the guilt and malediction in which such prevalence of vice and irreligion involved the majority of the nation.

From such premises, therefore, it necessarily followed, that the Jews, as a people, stood as much in need of the divine mercy as the Gentiles themselves ; and that some more powerful corrective of moral evil than their law had proved to be, was no less necessary for them than for the rest of mankind. The charges from the Old Testament which St. Paul had quoted, established this deduction ; namely, that the mouth of the Jew (who should plead for the efficacy of the law) was as much

stopped as that of the Gentiles ; and that in this sense, all the world, not the Gentile part only, but the Jewish part also, were alike guilty in the sight of God.

That such was the conclusion intended by the Apostle, and that he did not rest his argument on any primeval condemnation, is additionally evinced by his taking, in the first instance, a perfectly different ground. His object was to prove the necessity of that saving grace which was provided in the Gospel. And he begins his evidence of this necessity, not with Adam's fall, but with the gross and wilful departure of Adam's descendants from a knowledge of God, which they actually possessed ; and the rejection of which was followed by judicial blindness, and the grossest depravation. The marks of both are enumerated with a particularity which illustrates the moral misery of man, and establishes the conclusion, that either the utter destruction of mankind, or some adequate means of moral disenthralment, was the sole alternative consistent with the righteous government of God. To spare the human race, and to subdue their moral maladies by some proportioned method of cure, was evidently more suitable to the divine goodness ; and it was also obvious, that the deeper the disease, the divine wisdom and power would be the more clearly manifested in its cure.

Supposing, therefore, the Apostle to have taken exactly this view of the case, nothing could be more apposite than his melancholy detail of human enormities. But had it, on the other hand, been his design not to propound a remedy for predomi-

nant impiety and vice, but to announce, to all such as should believe in Christ, deliverance from an otherwise universally entailed curse, had such been his purpose, instead of portraying the moral miseries of man which were obvious to human inspection, would he not have asserted that leading fact (which could be known only through express revelation) of primeval curse and malediction, and made this supposed source of all human calamity the first link of his argumentative chain? But he does not lay this foundation; nor, whatever he may be thought to have said on this subject elsewhere, does he in this prime statement of man's moral exigence, so much as intimate, that hereditary guilt and condemnation were present to his thoughts.

Such, then, being the case, I conceive no one is authorised to suppose a fundamental principle which, in its most natural place, the Apostle himself has not introduced; and which, yet, could not in reason have been omitted, had it held the same place in the Apostle's doctrine as in that of modern theologists.

Having thus noticed some of the omissions which appear inconsistent with an intended forensic representation of the great blessing of the Gospel, I proceed to point out a few of those instances in which he has placed, beyond rational doubt, his own predominantly moral view of that "grace and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ," which he has made the subject of this important portion of his writings.

St. Paul begins his Epistle with a solemn declaration of his apostolical trust; and, in stating

the great purpose of his mission, he uses an expression which, however briefly, yet conclusively notifies, that, in his view, that purpose was strictly and essentially of a moral nature. He, and his associates in the ministry, he says, had received grace and apostleship, "in order to obedience of faith in all nations," εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. Here, therefore, in the comprehensive term of ὑπακοὴ πίστεως, we are told what work the Apostles were to accomplish; and, at least by implication, what blessing they were to be instrumental in conveying. They were sent as ambassadors from God to bring the Gentiles back to their allegiance, and to be the means of infusing the internal principle, which alone could make them truly obedient to him whom they were made to serve. It was the obedience of faith which was contemplated, because nothing, except the vital principle of faith, could produce obedience worthy of him who must be served, as well as "worshipped, in spirit and in truth."

Obedience, in fact, is a moral habit of the mind and heart, whatever may be the visible instances of its exercise. These, we know, if not animated by a moral intention, are no better than hypocrisy. The obedience, therefore, of which St. Paul speaks, was supremely and indispensably "a heart set to obey God's commandments:" that is, the spirit and essence of all moral rectitude. And the root of such a disposition must, by natural necessity, be as essentially moral as itself; for it is a moral apprehension only that can produce a moral affection.

It is true, that faith, in the Apostle's compre-

hensive language, includes the matter which was to be apprehended, as well as the act or habit of apprehension. But the result of obedience evidently implies, that the divine facts which were promulgated, corresponded to the feelings with which they were to be received. As a moral habit was the end, and as a moral apprehension was the necessary means, so, by equal necessity, the objects of that moral apprehension must themselves be of a moral nature, in order to their being morally apprehended.

Such, I conceive, must be our reasoning on the expression of "apostleship, in order to obedience of faith;" and the persuasion is at least reasonable, that such a declaration, in the commencement of the epistle, intimates the leading subject of the sequel to be of a moral, and not of a forensic, nature.

Another expression, of yet more obvious import, occurs soon afterwards in the sixteenth verse: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation."

These words distinctly express the nature of that salvation, which the Gospel of Christ was intended to confer. It was a salvation to be effected by the power of God. But this description does not accord with a salvation which was to consist in a forensic acquittal. In such an acquittal there would be mercy, and there might be wisdom; but there would be no conceivable room for the exercise of power. In declaring the Gospel, therefore, to be the power of God, the Apostle teaches us, that it is the instrument of accomplish-

ing some effect, to which Omnipotence alone is adequate ; and that effect, it is evident, can be of no other than a moral nature, for thus only could the Gospel be “the power of God unto salvation.” In fact, we could not conceive the divine power effectually exercised for the salvation of man in any other way than that of deliverance from moral thralldom, and communication of those moral virtues, which, by assimilating the soul to the divine nature, lay the only basis of its true happiness, here or hereafter.

It is farther to be remarked, that this definition most strictly accords with the Apostle’s introductory assertion, “that he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ ;” but was ready to promulgate it at that centre of human attainments where its pretensions were certain to be put to the severest trial. The expression of “not being ashamed” of the Gospel, connected with the assigned reason, implies the Apostle’s confidence, that it would, in the event, prove its divine character by its visible operation. He has, as it were, pledged himself to the world for the sovereign efficacy of the blessing, with the dispensing of which he was charged ; for, as it was the power of God unto salvation, its substantial results must be as conspicuous as they were infallible.

We cannot, therefore, doubt, that, in this deliberate expression of confidence, the Apostle had in his view all that had been hitherto attempted for the conquest of moral evil in the mind and heart of man. No light of pagan philosophy was unknown to him : and he fully appreciated the moral

excellence of the Jewish law ; but he felt that he might appeal to general experience, not only for the utter inefficacy of philosophy, but for “the weakness and unprofitableness” even of that dispensation by which the Jewish people had hitherto been distinguished. It would seem as if St. Paul took for granted, that the only sure ground and real source of human happiness was in some measure recognised both by Jew and Gentile, and aspired to by all minds which in any degree felt the instincts of their immortal nature. To this feeling of every morally awakened heart, the Apostle adapts the term “salvation ;” the import of which could not be mistaken, when thus represented as resulting from the “power of God.” It would be still more clear to such as had listened to the concurrent voice of philosophers and poets ; to both of whom the moral misery of man had been a constant topic, while adequate means of relief, such as would effectually free the mind from its conscious thralldom, were confessedly beyond their reach. In these few words, therefore, St. Paul takes his stand on that very ground where he would meet the deepest cravings of the human heart, and could offer the surest test of the heavenly blessing with which he was intrusted. In fact, nothing could have been said of the Gospel, more definitive as to its own excellence, or more adapted to the conscious moral exigencies of every upright mind.

As, therefore, the Apostle, in the words we are considering, evidently intended to exhibit that feature of the Gospel, which, in his view, constituted its highest praise, it can scarcely be doubted,

that it was on this theme he proposed, subsequently, to enlarge; that the matter of his glory, in the commencement, would be the subject of elucidation, in the sequel; and that, by consequence, the chain of argument, which he afterwards pursues, is directed to a moral rather than to a forensic conclusion.

A farther insight into the Apostle's design may be obtained, by closely observing his various application of those significant words which he so frequently introduces, *δικαίωω*, *δίκαιος*, and *δικαιοσύνη*. It is, in fact, on the precise meaning of these three words, which evidently resolve themselves into one common notion, that the question depends, whether the great benefit, on which he expatiates, be of a forensic or a moral nature?

That, in the course of this epistle, every one of these words is used in a moral sense, cannot be disputed. For example, *δικαίωω*, in Rom. vi. 7, where *δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας*, is rendered by our own translators, "freed from sin." *Δίκαιος*, also, is undeniably used to signify a morally righteous man, in Rom. v. 7; and it is equally clear, that in Rom. vi. 13, the *δικαιοσύνη*, to which our members are to be yielded as instruments, can be no other than moral righteousness.

Of these three words, the verb *δικαίωω* seems most extensive in meaning. As in the passage just referred to (Rom. vi. 7), it expresses a change, which must, in its nature, be matter of sensible experience; so, elsewhere, it no less clearly signifies an estimate formed, or a judgment pronounced, by the unerring Searcher of hearts. As in Rom. ii. 13,

“Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified (δικαιωθήσονται).” I must strongly question, however, whether it is used on any occasion in this latter reputative sense, except as recognising a moral quality in the subject, which is, in its nature, acceptable to God, and therefore meets his merciful, but, at the same time, his righteous approbation. For “we know,” says St. Paul, “that the judgment of God is according to truth :” Rom. ii. 2. I am strengthened in this persuasion by the import of the word Δικαιωθέντες, in Rom. v. 9. The Apostle had just stated, as an enhancement of the divine love to man, that when we were neither good nor righteous, but “as yet sinners, Christ died for us ; much more, then,” he adds, “being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” The argument is simply this :—If God was so gracious, when the moral disposition had in it nothing engaging, but every thing offensive ; now, when we bear a better character, are we not still more certain of his mercy ? The Apostle’s reasoning admits of no other construction ; and therefore we must attribute a moral meaning to the word δικαιωθέντες (whatever else it may include), as otherwise there would be no logical ground for an *à fortiori* conclusion. Besides, it is obvious, that as ἁμαρτωλοὶ is opposed to δίκαιος and ἀγαθός, so, in like manner, is δικαιωθέντες opposed to ἁμαρτωλοὶ : the contrast being not more clear in the former instance than in the latter. That the word expresses *what* the persons were in the divine estimation is undeniable ; but its place in the sentence, and its connexion with the

preceding terms, no less certainly oblige us to understand it, as implying, that God had made them substantially righteous by his gracious influence, as well as accounted them righteous in his own merciful estimation.

I might have remarked on the application of the same verb, in Rom. iii. 30 ; but the peculiar construction of this passage would require larger elucidation than would consist with my design.

I proceed, therefore, to consider the import of the term *δικαιοσύνη*, in Rom. v. 17 ; where it is evidently used to describe the matter of that blessing, which had been already expressed by the verb *δικαίω*.

That *δικαιοσύνη* has this meaning, in the passage referred to, I need scarcely take pains to prove. It is a righteousness which is the gift of God ; and which, in verse 15, is represented as a blessing proceeding from the second Adam, in effective opposition to that sinful propensity, which had been just before stated, as originating in the first Adam's transgression, and spreading its pernicious influence through all his posterity. The Apostle had already prepared his readers for this announcement, by observing that the first Adam was the type of him who was to come (ver. 14) ; and, accordingly, the remedial blessing which, in the 17th verse, he describes as the gift of righteousness, is declared by him (ver. 15) to flow not only from the grace of God, as its primary source, but directly and immediately, from the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ. What, therefore, we are taught, is clearly this,—that as Adam, through his transgression,

became a fountain-head of sin to his entire offspring, so the second Adam has been made a fountain-head of righteousness to all who are willing to receive that "unspeakable gift."

There can, therefore, be no doubt, that it is the leading blessing of the Gospel which is thus characterised; the sole question is respecting the nature of this righteousness; I mean, whether it be a righteousness of forensic imputation, or of inward and spiritual infusion?

I would observe, in the first place, that the terms in which St. Paul describes this great blessing, seem, of themselves, to indicate its moral rather than its forensic nature. It is a gift of righteousness, proceeding, though primarily, yet not immediately, from the grace of God (which would have been the natural statement in the case of imputation), but, directly and proximately, from the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ. It is a gift, too, which must be received in order to eventual blessedness; for they only who "receive the abundance of the grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life through Christ Jesus."

That the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, is, in this passage, contrasted with the pernicious influence which flowed from the one man, Adam, requires no proof; and it would seem to follow, as a thing of course, that the primary benefit which arises from the former, should correspond in its nature to the primary evil resulting from the latter. Now this primary evil, is stated by the Apostle to be sin; that is, the corrupt disposition, which,

through Adam's transgression, was implanted in human nature ; and which has subjected his entire posterity to the dominion of sinful appetites and passions. When, therefore, a remedial blessing is afforded, and the Godhead unites itself to human nature, to become, as it were, a second Adam, more powerful to liberate and purify than the first Adam to corrupt and enthrall, can we doubt, that the sin, that had entered through Adam, would be that to which the sanative efficacy of the incarnate Saviour would be primarily and chiefly directed ? On this ground, then, what can be concluded, but that, as the sin introduced by the fall of Adam was essentially a moral evil, whatever else of a physical nature might arise from it ; so the remedial blessing, which is opposed to it, namely, the gift of righteousness, through the grace of the incarnate Antitype, must be also essentially a moral good, with whatever other benefits or blessings it may be accompanied or followed ?

The Apostle, in stating the primary evil, has also stated its calamitous consequence ; by " one man," he says, " sin entered into the world, and death by sin : " and he has similarly declared the opposite happy result of the remedial blessing, that they who receive " the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness," shall reign in life by Jesus Christ. Here it may be asked, — Was the universal mortality of Adam's offspring, in consequence of his sin being imputed ; or of his sinful nature being communicated, to all his descendants ? And, doubtless, it might with some reason be supposed, that, if the primary evil were an imputation

of the first Adam's sin, the opposite blessing would be an imputation of the second Adam's righteousness. But St. Paul himself has so settled the leading question, as to leave no room for the latter supposition. His account of the effects of Adam's fall, is not more brief, than it is significant. "By one man," he says, "sin entered into the world, and death by sin;" that is, through Adam's transgression, a principle of moral evil was introduced into human nature; and of such a principle the mortality of that nature was the suitable concomitant. "So, also," he proceeds, "death passed upon all men, because all had sinned;" as much as to say, that, because the evil principle was universally transfused, the consequent mortality was alike universal.

Had the imputation of Adam's transgression been in the mind of St. Paul, this was the natural place for its being mentioned: but he puts the matter on another footing, when he states that death had passed upon all men, because all had sinned; that is, all were mortal, because all were sinful.

Sin, therefore, in man's nature, being thus represented by the Apostle as the one radical evil; the remedy, which he proceeds to describe, must have been meant to correspond to that evil; inasmuch as the substantive evil of implanted sin could be remedied only by an equally substantive gift of internal and implanted righteousness. For the one infinitely destructive calamity there was but the one efficacious cure; and, as death was the inseparable result of the former, everlasting life is

most suitably represented as the infallible result of the latter.

I am aware that some interpreters have thought proper to supply a supposed omission in St. Paul's expression, as if he had said, "because all have sinned in him," that is, in Adam. But, besides the utter gratuitousness of this addition, it would not accord with the Apostle's subsequent position, that, though sin was prevalent in the world previously to the law of Moses, the absence of law implied a comparative non-imputation,—evidently on the ground stated in the preceding chapter, that, where "there is no law, neither is there transgression;" that is, no violation of an expressly enjoined command. If, therefore, in the absence of a distinctly promulgated law, the actual sins of men were comparatively not imputed to them, there must be still less room for supposing an imputation of the sin of their first-parents. I think I need not illustrate the reasonableness of this conclusion.

Another meaning has certainly been forced upon the words now referred to, as if the term *νόμος*, in the latter part of the verse, conveyed a different sense from what it must bear in the commencement. But, in that case, St. Paul would naturally have added the article to the first *νόμος*, in order to mark the intended distinction. But the term being precisely the same in both instances, we are bound to understand the entire sentence in its obvious signification; namely, that, when there was no such express law as that of Moses, sin was comparatively not imputed. But it may be asked, why, then, is it said, in the next verse, that death

had reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression ?

I answer, because it is as much in the design of the Apostle to explain the deadly influence of communicated sin, as it is foreign from his purpose to assert the supposed fact of imputed sin ; and, accordingly, he declares, that although, where, in the absence of express law, there was a comparative non-imputation of actual sin, still the principle of sin, which universally operated, produced, as it were, by a natural pregnancy (St. James, i. 15), an equally universal mortality.

Nor yet does St. Paul state this fact, merely to explain man's calamitous condition ; it is also for the happier purpose of introducing, with proportioned force, the more than commensurate remedy : and, therefore, after remarking that the death, which sin had produced, reigned even over those who had not been literal imitators of Adam's transgressions, he adds, " who is the type of him that was to come ;" hereby intimating, that the extent of the evil influence, arising from the fall of the first Adam, would at least be equalled by the effects which should proceed from the grace of the second Adam.

As, therefore, the evil stated in this passage is, not the imputation of Adam's transgression, but the universal communication and deadly influence of the sinful principle which that act introduced, so must we suitably and proportionally estimate the remedial gift of righteousness, by which the second Adam was to repair the moral ruin which

man's nature had sustained. It is, in fact, represented by the Apostle as a practical and substantive ruin of that nature, without the intermixture of one forensic idea. If, therefore, the nature of the opposite blessing were even less definitely propounded, it would be reasonable to conclude, that the nature of the blessing would essentially correspond to the nature of the exigence; and, accordingly, that the principle of righteousness, proceeding from the one man, Jesus Christ, should be as practical and substantive as the principle of sin which it was to counteract and repel. But the truth of the question does not rest, either on the rationality of this conclusion, or merely on the grounds which have been stated: several other evidences of the Apostle's sense of the term *δικαιοσύνη*, remain to be stated.

Were "the gift of righteousness, which is by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ," a matter of imputation, and not of substantive communication, the righteousness so imputed would, of necessity, be neither more nor less than the perfect obedience, active and passive, of Him, who had so signally humbled himself for man's salvation. But had this been the notion of St. Paul, he would scarcely have expressed the personal, or official, righteousness of our Redeemer, in the very next verse, not by *δικαιοσύνη*, but by *δικαίωμα*. From this remarkable distinction of terms, we are warranted to conclude, that, in the mind of the Apostle, the perfect righteousness of the second Adam, by which the great evangelic blessing was procured, could not be identical with that righteousness

which he had described, as the very matter and essence of the blessing. Such a conclusion is strengthened by the Apostle's exactness in the use of terms, in this part of his epistle. And thus, as to the παράπτωμα of the first Adam he opposes the δικαίωμα of the second Adam; so, with strictly similar precision, to the ἁμαρτία, which flowed forth from the transgression of the one, he opposes the gift of righteousness, which was to proceed from the exuberant grace of the other.

It is also to be remarked, that whereas the gift of δικαιοσύνη, which proceeds from the grace of the second Adam, profits those alone who "receive" it; the δικαίωμα, which belongs to Him, is, in a preliminary way, available for "all men;" for in no other possible sense, can the position in the 18th verse be understood, than in this; that, as the παράπτωμα of the one had placed all men in a state of κέρμα, with liability to κατάκριμα, so the δικαίωμα of one had placed all men in such a state of χάρις, as implied a capacity of attaining the blessing of δικαίωσις ζωῆς.

On the other hand, had St. Paul intended to represent the forensic imputation of the Messiah's perfect righteousness, as the great blessing of the Gospel, the term by which he has expressed this righteousness (δικαίωμα), would have been used by him to express the matter of that blessing, instead of δικαιοσύνη, a word, the form of which marks a class of Greek substantives, peculiarly denoting a *habit* of the mind.

But a yet more decisive evidence remains to be noticed; namely, the application of δικαιοσύνη, in an

incontrovertibly moral sense, at a very short distance afterwards, without any intervening mark of an altered signification.

I refer to those repeated instances, which occur in the sixth chapter, in four, if not five, different places. The Apostle had used the term *δικαιοσύνη*, in the last verse of the fifth chapter; and evidently in the same sense, as when he had spoken, in the 17th verse, of the gift of righteousness; consequently, not more than twelve verses intervene, in which there is not a particle indicating an altered use of the word. When, therefore, at this short distance, the Apostle exhorts those who had received “the gift of righteousness,” to yield their members to God, as instruments of righteousness; can we imagine those to whom this epistle was addressed, to have formed any other conclusion, than that the righteousness, in which their members were to be employed, was essentially the same righteousness which they had received, as a gift, from the grace of the second Adam? Had the Apostle meant to be otherwise understood, how easy would it have been for him, either to diversify the terms, or to have annexed some distinctive epithet to the one *δικαιοσύνη* or to the other. When, therefore, there is not an apparent shade of difference between the former and latter application of the term; when it is simply *δικαιοσύνη* which forms the matter of the gift by grace (v. 17), and through which, grace reigns unto eternal life (v. 21); and simply *δικαιοσύνη*, to which the members are to be yielded as instruments (vi. 13), and for the service of which, that of sin was exchanged

(vi. 18), I would ask, can any sound reason be given, why, where the Apostle intimated no distinction, a gratuitous distinction of the widest kind should be forced upon the unvaried simplicity of his deeply deliberated expressions? No writer, of even the most common abilities, would thus pass abruptly, and without the slightest explanation, from a peculiar, and in some sort technical, use of a term, to its obvious import, and ordinary application. We cannot, therefore, in reason, attribute such an anomaly in discourse to a writer whose natural and acquired powers were inferior only to those of his apostleship; and, consequently, we must conclude, that the sense of *δικαιοσύνη*, in the 17th and 21st verses of the fifth chapter, can be no other than that which, of necessity, must be given to it in the 13th and several other subsequent verses of the ensuing chapter.

I believe it will be granted, on all sides, that the sense of this one term is, as it were, the hinge upon which the Apostle's entire doctrine turns; and, accordingly, if a moral meaning must be given to "the gift of righteousness," which is received through the grace of the second Adam, the point is settled; and to be justified, in St. Paul's sense, is to be made righteous in mind and heart through the effectual grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; because, as I have said, the verb *δικαίω*, and the substantive *δικαιοσύνη*, are so united in the whole of St. Paul's reasoning, as to make the meaning of the former identical with that of the latter.

It may be thought, that expressions are to be found in several parts of this epistle, which seem

to give a different aspect to the general doctrine. But I venture to maintain, that this cannot be, if the above observations are founded. I conceive the particular last adverted to, is, of itself, sufficient to place the Apostle's leading principle beyond the shadow of a doubt; and the nature of this principle being once ascertained, dissonance in any of the subsidiary links in the chain is absolutely impossible. This might be in a composition of mere man; but is utterly inconceivable in a work written under the unerring guidance of the divine Spirit. But, after all, the Apostle has given a yet more direct evidence, that the great theme of his discourse is, essentially, a moral blessing; and that the imputation of Christ's righteousness, as the ground of a forensic acquittal, was not in his thoughts.

St. Paul, after having completed his argument in the first nine chapters of the epistle, thus states the result:—

“What shall we say then, that the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith? But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness: wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law.”

That these words, as concluding the entire train of the Apostle's reasonings, fix also the leading topic of his discourse, cannot be questioned. The only doubt, therefore, can be this; whether the righteousness which the Gentiles attained was a

moral or a forensic righteousness? But that it was a moral, and not a forensic righteousness, is shewn distinctly by the expression which describes the non-attainment of the Jews, and which is evidently placed in strict contrast with the attainment of the Gentiles. What these latter attained, was righteousness: what the Jews did not attain, was the law of righteousness. But the law of righteousness necessarily conveys a moral notion; and, therefore, the righteousness attained by the Gentiles, with which this failure of the Jews is contrasted, must also be a moral righteousness.

This conclusion can be combated on one supposition only; that the Jews did not merely use wrong means, but sought a wrong object. Let it, therefore, be observed, that the Apostle has incontrovertibly recognised the rightness of the object, by censuring only the error of the means. Israel, he tells us, did not attain to the law of righteousness, simply because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law. Consequently, in St. Paul's view, the end was as right as the method was defective; and thus the last link of his chain both illustrates and establishes what he had before declared, that what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, was effectually secured by the grace of the Gospel; namely, that in those who received its influence, the righteousness of the law should be fulfilled, as being enabled, through that influence, to walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

I have now stated the more obvious grounds on which I conceive a moral, and not a forensic,

justification, to be the great topic of the Epistle to the Romans; and, as this important portion of the sacred volume must be at unity with itself, I rest confident, that the more closely it shall be examined, the more will its consistency, in all its parts, be manifested and established.

Thus, even by the evidence of a few leading expressions, I should think, the doctrine of St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, is fairly taken out of the hands of his forensic interpreters. But I cannot conclude my remarks without some attempt to shew, that among the passages to which I have referred, two, in particular, which perhaps are the most important of them all, are not less invincibly opposed to that other species of interpretation which has been attempted by Mr. Locke, and, at a later time, by Dr. Taylor of Norwich.

According to both these commentators, the peculiar blessings of the Gospel consist in new external privileges, granted alike to Jews and Gentiles; in fuller and more liberal instruction; and in higher and more engaging motives.

These are supposed, by both the authors I have named, to be the properties on which St. Paul has enlarged in the doctrinal part of his epistle; and on account of which he has so strenuously magnified the glories of the Christian dispensation.

How far St. Paul would have done credit, even to his good sense as a man, in drawing out into a long and seemingly elaborate discourse, the few simple and very obvious particulars, which those two celebrated writers have represented as the

subject of his discourse, I need not inquire ; because I conceive it will be evident, on any degree of serious consideration, that the Apostle's two definitions, of the Gospel itself, as the power of God unto salvation, and of the chief blessing of the Gospel, as the gift of righteousness, by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, contain, respectively, a magnitude and substance of import, utterly unsusceptible of that superficial and shadowy explanation to which the theories of Mr. Locke and Dr. Taylor would agree to reduce them.

The Gospel of Christ, says the Apostle, is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth. What was observed respecting a supposed forensic salvation, that it implied no exercise of the divine omnipotence, may no less truly be said of a salvation consisting in outward privileges, ampler instruction, and more exalted motives. Such an enlarged notification from the Father of Lights, might, indeed, as in the forensic case, manifest his wisdom, and his condescending mercy ; but no more than in that, would it imply the exercise of divine power. To define the Gospel, therefore, as St. Paul defines it ; to say of it, that it is the power of God unto salvation ; is to assert its infinite superiority to all merely external privileges, to all instructions of word, or even example, to all merely propounded motives. It was to say of the Gospel the utmost which could be said of it in human language ; and what for ever precludes the suggestion of any lower method of interpretation.

I have already remarked upon the deep import of the Apostle's expressions ; and I may now add,

that, as to explain those words in a forensic sense, would charge St. Paul with palpable incongruity of expression ; so, those interpreters, who apply them to a dispensation of merely external privileges and provisions, would not less impute to him the most unaccountable exaggeration.

To the rescuing of the Apostle both from the one charge and the other, it is only necessary to give him credit for using terms in their exact meaning. In this exercise of common candour, his words will hardly be either misapplied or underrated ; and to him who knows himself, his mental weaknesses and wants, his spiritual diseases and his moral capabilities, the assurance of a divine power, in gracious readiness to enfranchise his immortal spirit, to subdue his corruptions, to purify his heart, and to unite it to that sovereign good for whom it was created, will be, of all communications which could be made from heaven, the most satisfactory and delightful.

It may be, that the extensiveness of this blessing, as assured “to every one that believeth,” may, to some, have seemed to require a qualified interpretation : and there might be some shadow of reason for such a thought, if the Apostle had not fully explained, in various parts of this epistle, in how comprehensive and practical a sense he used the term of “believing.”

By examining the passages to which I refer, it will I think be found, that, by believing, St. Paul means, neither professional assent, nor any single act of the mind, however express or determined. The term, not only in this passage, but, indeed, in

all St. Paul's epistles, signifies, in the first instance, such an apprehension of the divine realities, promulgated by the Gospel, as at once convinced the understanding, and engaged the heart. And when, as in the present case, he speaks of believing as that which ensures the possession of evangelical blessings, he himself has taught us to include in the very term, the practical movements of heart and conduct to which an unfeigned belief of the Gospel would necessarily lead. I particularly refer to what is said in the 10th chapter, 13th and 14th verses: we are there expressly taught, that believing the Gospel does not, of itself, confer the salvation which the Gospel has secured, and to which it is subservient; but that, by cordially believing, we are put into the way of attaining that salvation; attaining it, I say, not by exertions of our own mental powers, but from the gracious operation of the Almighty God. For, according to the Apostle, the proximate means of obtaining the promised salvation, is, prayer:—"For the same Lord over all," saith he, "is rich unto all that call upon him; for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved."

It is, therefore, as conducive to effectual fervent prayer, that believing is represented to be indispensable. For the Apostle immediately asks, how shall they call on Him, in whom they have not believed? And hence, it inevitably follows, that it is not to the bare act of believing that the Apostle ascribes saving efficacy, but to the practical results to which unfeigned belief of the Gospel could not fail to lead. Consequently, also, the salvation,—

which he here connects with prayer, and which can be no other than that which he had before connected with believing, but, as he now shews, not with abstract, but with practical believing,—is not a blessing which belongs to merely professional Christians (nor, I may add, ensured to any measure of mere mental confidence), but is a blessing attained only by devout and practical Christians ; who, from a just sense of their spiritual necessities, call upon Him, in whom they have believed. On the whole, then, it must be concluded, that a salvation, of which the power of God is the source, and which is conferred on each individual, in answer to prayer, must be something infinitely beyond external privileges, promises, or instructions. It can imply nothing less than a communicated spirit (as St. Paul elsewhere describes it) of power, of love, and of a sound mind ; a deliverance from the power of sin ; a union of the heart with its supreme and infinite object ; and such a light shining on the heart, as frees the immortal spirit from all the intoxicating delusions of the world, the flesh, and the devil. With this view of a present salvation (at once the pledge and earnest of that which is eternal in the heavens) strictly accords that other more specific representation of the primary blessing of the Gospel,—“ the gift of righteousness, by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ : ”—as, I trust, it has been shewn, that St. Paul, by this expression, describes a substantive blessing, a matter, not of imputation, but of communication from that fulness of grace, of which the second Adam was made the fountain ; so must it equally appear, that such a

blessing, so communicated, and, when received and retained, terminating in so glorious an issue (the reigning in life everlasting, through Christ Jesus), must be regarded as rising infinitely above all external privileges, or merely propounded promises and eventual prospects.

In fact, every evidence, which has been produced to shew that the *δωρεά τῆς δικαιοσύνης* is not a forensic, but a moral and spiritual blessing, proves, by parity of reason, that the possessors of this gift are those alone who are Christians, not only outwardly, but inwardly; in the spirit, and not in the letter. If the gift of righteousness be not the imputation of a character, but the implantation of a principle, a principle opposite to the principle of sin derived from the first Adam, then must it imply a substantive acquisition, as distinct, in its nature, from outward and visible profession, as it is from the mere exercise of intellectual assent, or mental confidence.

Besides, if the expression, “gift of righteousness,” be considered, as in reason it must, with the previous description of that Gospel in and through which it is communicated, it will be evident, that the profession of Christianity is supposed by St. Paul to take place antecedently to the reception of the blessing to which it is conducive. For they who so believed the Gospel, as to engage in the devotional pursuit of the salvation which it offered, would naturally, in the very first instance, “profess and call themselves Christians.” Yet still it rested with the divine wisdom, when, and in what manner, to bestow a blessing, which was to be

sought by “calling on the name of the Lord.” I need not prove more fully, that to be saved, in thus calling, could mean nothing less, than to be made partakers of salvation by the power of God; which salvation, again, can be no other, than receiving the gift of righteousness in this world, and the congenial and consummating gift of everlasting life, in that world wherein dwelleth righteousness. It surely, therefore, is only necessary to allow those significant expressions their just weight and import, in order to be satisfied that the salvation by the power of God, which the Gospel has provided, and the gift of righteousness which it confers on those who seek it, are infinitely beyond all that can be externally professed, and all that can be forensically imputed.

In a word, to suppose that the reception of the δωρεά τῆς δικαιοσύνης can mean any thing merely external, is to admit a persuasion as inconsistent with the very terms as with the place which they hold in the Apostle’s discourse. And may I not add, that there is as great an inconsistency in resolving this “unspeakable gift” into an act, on God’s part, of forensic imputation? The very terms, as I have already intimated, forbid the supposition. A gift of righteousness received, is evidently a different thing from a character of righteousness imputed. As well might be imagined the χάρισμα τοῦ Θεοῦ, the ζωὴ αἰώνιος ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, to be imputed, as the δωρεά ἐν χάριτι τῇ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.¹

¹ The gift of God, eternal life through Jesus Christ. Rom. vi. 23. The gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ. v. 15.

I cannot help adding one remark. It would seem hardly possible, that the low interpretation of Mr. Locke, and of Dr. Taylor, could have been given to the expressions now under consideration, if they had been tried by their own obvious import. But a forensic meaning having been forcibly impressed upon the words of St. Paul, by Lutheran and Calvinist commentators, the moral sense, which in earlier times no one had disputed, became nearly lost to view; and the sole labour seemed to be that of extending the limit, and abating the supposed amount, of a benefit, in either way, external and circumstantial. If the primary blessing of the Gospel was, in its essence, a mere matter of imputation, it might, to minds of a colder temperament and more latitudinarian taste, appear not unreasonable to regard such imputation as coextensive with the Christian profession; whereas, had the expressions in question been still understood in that moral sense, of which alone, I trust, I have shewn them to be susceptible, the thought of attenuating their high and holy import into external profession and corporate privileges, could never have occurred to a rational mind. It would have been irresistibly felt, that a moral salvation effected by the power of God, and a gift of righteousness actually received, through the grace of the incarnate Godhead, could belong to those only who were Christians in spirit, no less than in profession; and who, not satisfied with the form of godliness, had so called upon the name of the Lord as to be partakers of its power.

ON REDEMPTION AND SALVATION BY CHRIST,
AS EXHIBITED IN THE EPISTLES TO THE
ROMANS AND THE HEBREWS.

THE opinion which I expressed, and which you wished to have more particularly, was this, that distinct apprehensions of what our Saviour did, once for all, in the work of redemption, are not necessary to our participating in the results of that divine transaction.

Now you will observe, I do not say, distinct apprehensions of redemption itself, or of Him who accomplishes it; but merely distinct apprehensions of what our Saviour did once for all; by which, I mean all that our Saviour did, in order to harmonise mercy to fallen man with the necessary strictness of God's general government.

It is well known that many have made this part of our Saviour's mysterious work the main object of attention. They speak as if the satisfaction made to God's broken law, by the sacrifice of Christ, were the chief groundwork and pledge of actual and individual salvation; and they accordingly conceive distinct apprehension of that pledge to be the chief ingredient in saving faith.

I, on the contrary, am obliged to think, that however the sacrifice of Christ, in its expiatory aspect, may be justly deemed a groundwork, it is

by no means a pledge of actual and individual salvation. It makes this blessing attainable; it removes every pre-existing obstacle; it procures every pre-requisite: but it does not confer the blessing itself. It opens the door of God's treasure-house; it provides us with every means of entering: but we must use these means; we must ourselves enter, and personally obtain the treasure; otherwise, what was done, once for all, on our behalf, shall, in our instance, have been done in vain. Christ, in my mind, is our Redeemer in two different respects: namely, in what he did *for us*, by one great preliminary act; and in what he does *in us*, by his present gracious operation. In that first act, he did every thing in our behalf which belonged to the nature of the case; that is, he accomplished every thing for the good of man, and the happiness of the future church, which could be accomplished in a general and preparatory way. But here the first great act necessarily terminated; because that which remained to be done, could not be done for us, but must be done in us. Obstacles could be once for all removed; every necessary expedient might be once for all provided; still these were but preliminaries to a great moral purpose, which purpose could be effected solely in individual minds and hearts. Every thing, therefore, antecedent to this applicatory operation, that is, every thing done generally and once for all, amounts, in my mind, only to *salvability*; whereas the work wrought by omnipotent grace within us, and upon us; in our minds, and hearts, and lives; together with the infallible con-

sequences of this work, here and hereafter, can alone realise the idea of *salvation*.

Such being the obvious truth of the case, I confess I cannot see in what manner our spiritual well-being depends on our clearly apprehending the grounds of our salvability. This benefit extends to all, whether it be or be not adverted to, until forfeited by final impenitence. And though our apprehensions respecting the reasons of this mercy were ever so clear, still the consolation, or confidence, must be limited by the nature of the mercy ; that is, however distinct our views, they extend but to salvability : a prospect, the want of which would be misery ; but the existence of which gives no actual comfort, except so far as we have evidence that the *possible* blessing is becoming *certainly* our own.

On this ground, then, I conclude, that it is not on the preliminaries of our salvability, in other words, on what our Lord did once for all, that we are principally to exercise our thought. This, doubtless, in its place and proportion, may well deserve our attention ; and, so far as it is open to inquiry, affords matter of grateful admiration to every capable mind. But, in our own great concern, we are to conclude upon our salvability, and apply ourselves to our salvation. As, by creation, we are capable of natural happiness, so, by the first great act of redemption, we are made capable of moral happiness. But, as it is not by thinking on the reasons of our creation, but on the ends of it, that we are likely to turn our natural existence to good account ; so, similarly, it is not by

dwelling upon the reasons of our redemption, but on the object of it respecting ourselves, and the means of possessing the offered benefit, that we can hope to make what was done once for all, the ground of our rational comfort and appropriate happiness.

Wherein, then, consists the salvation which we are thus called to pursue? Evidently not in that which is done already for all; not in cancelling a malediction which was suspended, in its first descent, by the promise of the seed of the woman, and was turned into mercy by the blood of the cross. Thus to define salvation, would be to overlook the admonition of St. Paul, "Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above: or, Who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead:" of which words the obvious import is, that Christ has already done for us all which could be done without ourselves. He tasted death for every man; and, therefore, he is already, as much as in a general sense is possible, "the Saviour of all men." But he is the general Saviour, in order that he may be the particular Saviour of them who believe, of them who come unto him, that they may have life: the inward life, therefore, of effectual grace in the mind and heart, is, alone, salvation. This, according to St. Paul, is the riches of the glory of the mystery, which he and his fellow Apostles were to make known to the Gentiles; namely, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

If, in comparatively removing attention from

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what was done by our Saviour, generally, and once for all, we were liable to become less attentive to Christ himself, there would be room for demur and apprehension. But, in transferring our thoughts, from the reasons of general salvability to the nature and means of actual and personal salvation, we merely pass from those acts of the Redeemer which are most remote, and, therefore, most obscure, and which, in their own nature are mysterious, and, at most, cognisable only by abstract intellect, to those present operations of redeeming grace, which, by producing felt effects, imply experimental acquaintance, not only with the blessing communicated, but with the living source from which it is derived.

Nothing can be less intended, than to depreciate, in any respect, what our blessed Redeemer so astonishingly performed eighteen hundred years ago. But if it be a fact that the same blessed agent is now as ready to accomplish the salvation of each, individually, as he was then to secure the possibility and means of salvation for all, is it not obvious, that our supreme concern now lies in the work yet to be wrought in our particular instance; and that, in this way, we may know our blessed Saviour as a present and personal benefactor, in a manner infinitely beyond all that can be known of him by the closest application of mind to what was done for a general and preliminary purpose? We can know only by information what was then done for us; but we consciously feel what is accomplished within us; and while, in a general blessing, comprehending countless millions, and that a conditional, rather than actual blessing,

our own individual share can, in the nature of things, be neither discernible nor impressive, the work effected by divine grace within us, in proportion to its authenticity, speaks for itself, and comes home to the inmost heart. Then only do the experimental parts of Holy Scripture become intelligible: then, what our divine Redeemer has asserted of himself, is not only divinely verified, but exquisitely elucidated; and a matter-of-fact apprehension of his person, character, and office, recognising all that is recorded of him in the sacred volume, and resting in him, as infinitely the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever,—grows up in the mind, and gains strength and clearness from day to day, through unintermitting recourse, unfailing support, and consequent increase of evidence within our own breasts, that God has given eternal life, not in prospect only, but in substantial commencement; and this life is in his Son. And this vital intercourse has no limit: if we are not wanting to ourselves, we shall grow in this grace, and in the knowledge and love which it sustains, to the last moment of life. Can we, then, in any other way, do so much honour to what was, in the first instance, done for us, as by devoting our whole mind and heart, not to the mystery itself, but to the substantial purpose to which the mystery was meant to be subservient? It is possible to mistake salvability for salvation, and, through that error, so to rely upon the former, as not to use all diligence respecting the latter; but it is utterly impossible to disregard salvability, in exclusive concern for salvation. If it were possible for

salvability, or for the grounds of salvability, never to enter our thoughts, in seeking present, experimental salvation, through the omnipotent power and communicated influence of the Word made flesh, we ascribe the truest honour, and the only true honour, to that which we seem to overlook. The most settled adherence of thought to what was done eighteen hundred years ago, may, after all, be only saying, "Lord, Lord;" but there can be no mistake in making it the object of life, to know him inwardly and experimentally: to feel "the power of his resurrection," and to be conformed to his death; this is, eminently and infallibly, to do the will of his Father.

But in thus simply pursuing the one thing needful, while we best provide for future safety, we also best escape present perplexity. To pursue inward and spiritual salvation, through the omnipotent grace of Christ, is much less a business of the head than of the heart. The disease of sin is not a matter of doubtful disputation; it is consciously felt by the enlightened mind, and must, therefore, be consciously removed. The life of God above all things, is, in like manner, a settled sensation of the inner man; and, so far as it exists, like other affections of the mind, must be matter of consciousness. The influence, therefore, which works these effects, must, of course, also be matter, not of theoretic apprehension, but of felt experience. I do not mean that it is perceivable in itself—our Saviour's illustration from the wind implies the contrary,—but I mean, that the results are so self-evidently above human nature, as to satisfy the

mind respecting the agency to which it is indebted. It is accordingly remarkable, that, in these experimental views, good men, of very different doctrinal theories, maintain an agreement, not arrived at in any other instance. The highest anti-Calvinist churchman, who most closely follows the consent of antiquity, and a Scotch Presbyterian peasant, who keeps the Assembly's Catechism, and the Westminster Confession, on the same shelf with the Holy Scripture, if only equally devout, and equally alive to the evil of sin, and the happiness of loving God, would, in the matter now before us, speak, not exactly the same words, but substantially the same ideas. I believe it would be found also, that the more deep the devotional pursuit, the more evident would be the regard to incarnate Godhead: and the more unreserved the adherence to the baptismal faith of the church, in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In asserting this agreement, I speak from continued, and, as far as has been in my power, extended observation; and I have found more and more cause to feel, with St. Augustin, that there is a Teacher of hearts, who has his chair in the heavens.

But, when I leave the experimental concern, and turn to the doctrinal; to that system, I mean, which would fix our chief attention on what our Lord did, once for all, as if this were supereminently the faith of the Christian, do I find agreement respecting the thing to be apprehended? so far from it, that, on this point, nothing can be more opposed than Calvinist to Calvinist; yea, than

Calvin himself to his celebrated disciple, Dr. Owen. These dissonances are generally unknown to the great body of doctrinal Christians. And it is as well they should remain so, until it shall please Providence to diffuse a clearer and purer light than that of either Dr. Owen or his master. But the disagreement is too substantial, to escape a strict inquirer; and it is, in my opinion, such as to make the apprehension of what our Lord has done, once for all, quite a different thing in the mind of Dr. Owen's literal followers, from what it must be in their mind who strictly agree with Calvin. I take Dr. Owen's own statement of this doctrinal dissonance, as given in his discourse of divine justice. His own belief, as he tells us, is, that the sacrifice of Christ was necessary, to satisfy a vindictive attribute in the Deity, which was not to be appeased but by adequate satisfaction in kind; that is, by punishment, if not personal, yet by substitution: while he acknowledges that Augustin, Calvin, Dr. Twisse, the prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly, and other eminent men, conceived, that the necessity for expiation did not exist in the divine attributes, but in the divine government; and that, consequently, Christ did not die to appease divine wrath, but to reconcile gratuitous mercy to man, with what may be called the *political* good order of the intelligent universe. According, therefore, to Dr. Owen, the disposition in God to save man, is a result exclusively of Christ's satisfaction; but, according to Augustin and Calvin, the gracious disposition in God existed antecedently to all satisfaction; and

did itself devise that mysterious method of removing the sole obstacle to mercy ; namely, the possible dangerous consequences of unreservedly remitting a wilful and aggravated transgression.

Now, need I take pains to shew, that, in the two supposed cases, the apprehension of what our Saviour did for us in the way of expiation, and the reliance induced by that apprehension, is of a radically different nature ?

Were Dr. Owen or his followers able to prove themselves right, then, I confess, all I have been saying in defence of my own opinion would be without force : there being, on that supposition, no philanthropy in God, but that which the satisfaction of Christ has produced, the intent of that satisfaction can no longer be measured by a supposed universality of divine benevolence, there being, on Dr. Owen's plan, no such thing. How far, therefore, the efficacy of Christ's death was meant to extend, must be unknown. The idea of supra-Calvinists would, no doubt, be the most reasonable,—that “ Christ did not taste death for every man, and that he is not the Saviour of all men,” but the Redeemer and Saviour, first and last, of an exclusively elected number. This is, at least, a consistent sequel of Dr. Owen's primary idea ; and could the whole thus far be made out, I confess I could no longer question the essential importance of distinctly apprehending, and exclusively relying on, what Christ had once for all done : because, in this view, there would be no salvability ; all would be salvation,—a finished salvation (as some are pleased to call it,) of a small but unalter-

able remnant. To rest every thing, therefore, on this first and last segregation, and exclusively to place reliance on the act by which the favoured individuals were sealed for eternity, would be, in such a state of things, the most consistent, indeed the only consistent, point to which the anxious mind could be directed, either as a subject of thought, or as a source of consolation. A new heart and right spirit need not engage solicitude, because, so far as they were necessary, they would infallibly come of themselves. Their presence might gratify, as an evidence of salvation ; but, if the first great link in the chain of individual destiny were wanting, pursuit of inward rectitude was fruitless ; if that link existed, it was superfluous. Consequently, implicit confidence in what was done, once for all, must comprise every thing which could, in reason, be either enjoined or recommended.

But, if more moderate Calvinists are rather to be listened to ; if Augustin, and Calvin, and Twisse, and the late Andrew Fuller (as fair and wise a Calvinist as his day produced), ought to turn the scale against Dr. Owen and his party ; in a word, if the expiation of Christ was meant to effect harmony, not in the divine nature, (which never, surely, could be disharmonised by the insect man !) but in the divine government ; that is, to make the grace of the Gospel consistent with general order ; then it will necessarily follow, that the expiation of Christ, in its strict and literal sense, is to be relied upon for that which it effected, and not for that to which it was not meant to extend. To reconcile mercy to man with the general government of

God, was to remove an obstacle, not to accomplish the object. To all rational appearance, this was to surmount, doubtless, a great, but still a single difficulty. Until this exigence was met, there might have been a legal impossibility of relieving man : but the providing for this exigence, in however admirable a manner, still, in itself, only made that legally possible which might have been impossible before. The moral difficulty was, therefore, still to be obviated ; man, morally diseased, was to be morally healed ; man, morally alienated from God, “an enemy in his mind through wicked works,” was to be morally reconciled to God. For this effectual work upon man himself, all legal adjustment could only open the way. Consequently, even on the principles of genuine Calvinists, (I say genuine, as agreeing with Calvin himself,) the moral effect, which reclaims the mind and heart from thralldom and rebellion, can alone be accounted salvation ; while the satisfaction to God’s government cannot, in itself, imply any thing more than clear and unobstructed salvability.

I do not mean to say, that either extreme or moderate Calvinists are strictly consistent with their respective views. I rather imagine, that excessive Calvinists are, in general, happily inconsistent in their moral conclusions ; and it appears to me, that moderate Calvinists are seldom, if ever, consistent in their theological deductions. The former class seem to shrink from their first principles, in placing less reliance on what they suppose to have been done once for all, than their theory would seem to warrant : and the latter class (the

more moderate Calvinists) seem to overstep their first principles, in requiring distinct apprehension of the ground of salvability; as if this particular act of the mind were a still surer pledge of individual safety, than even experimental participation. I do not now stop to animadvert upon either view. I have already endeavoured to shew, that experimental participation in our Redeemer's saving power, is exclusively the one thing needful. Leaving it, therefore, to high Calvinists to explain, on the one hand, how, amidst the supposed rejection of myriads, individual confidence can be rationally sustained, except by conscious marks of efficacious grace; and to moderate Calvinists, to justify their reliance for salvation on that which, by their own shewing, can amount but to salvability, I content myself with asking this single question,—How, amidst so much dissonance and ambiguity, a clear subject of thought, a distinct position to be believed, can, by any possibility, be made out to common hearers and readers? I can well conceive a rightly disposed heart, carrying a submissive mind through these embarrassments; but I cannot imagine that it should belong to the vitality of faith, clearly to apprehend the subject-matter of so much painful doubt and perplexing disputation.

But it will, perhaps, be said, What are all these reasonings, against the authority of Holy Scripture? Do we not find, faith in the blood of Christ, reconciliation in his death, glorying in his cross, the being healed by his stripes, and other strictly similar ideas, so dwelt upon in the New Testament, as to connect them with all that is vital in Christian

faith or practice? And should we not overlook the united import of these declarations, as emphatical as they are numerous, if we did not fix our chief attention and ultimate hope on the redemption, once for all, accomplished by the death of Christ?

To answer this objection at large would require, not a few paragraphs, but a volume. I cannot, therefore, hope, by any thing I may now say, to prove my agreement with Holy Scripture; my endeavour must be limited to a simple statement of the ground on which I myself have surmounted this seeming difficulty.

In studying the New Testament with the closest application of which my mind was capable, and with that united attention, both to consecutive and verbal import, which I conceived to be superlatively warranted, as well as demanded, by written dictates of Omniscience, I have long since become settled in the persuasion, that most passages of Holy Scripture, which, during the last three hundred years, have been generally referred to what was done, once for all, for expiating sin, and opening the gate of mercy, are much rather to be understood as speaking of the internal work upon the mind and heart; and that the death of Christ is, in these instances, far more dwelt upon as the source of healing influence to the spirits of men, than as the mysterious consideration on which threatened vengeance was averted.

I am far from supposing, that the effect of Christ's death on the general circumstances of mankind may not be frequently in view; but, in

the far greater number even of such instances, I conceive the general benefit to be much less the reversal of condemnation, than the preparation of a spiritual medicine which should expel the poison of sin; and the providing spiritual food which should nourish the morally convalescent soul to life everlasting. The dying and rising Saviour is repeatedly represented as being, himself, this medicine, and this food. Doubtless he is, in every possible sense of the word, our Redeemer; nor is it ever to be forgotten, that "he gave his life a ransom;" that he is "the propitiation for our sins;" that, as high priest over the house of God, he "ever liveth to make intercession for us;" and thus assures us, at all times, of finding mercy and grace to help us in time of need. These great truths can never lose their importance; they are, every day and hour, our passport to the throne of grace, and our pledge that we shall not come in vain. But they will not be a substitute for the grace which we come to implore, nor can the death of Christ, as reversing primeval condemnation, serve instead of the practical effects which that death is to produce, influentially, on the mind and heart.

"He gave himself for us," we are expressly told, "to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The end of Christ's death, therefore, is fulfilled, only so far as this purpose is accomplished.

Might it not, then, be reasonably supposed, that this leading object of our Saviour's death would be the point principally dwelt upon in the

New Testament ? Adequate information respecting preliminary and preparatory purposes, might be fairly expected ; but the continued and lasting results, the application of the remedy once for all provided, to the actual disenthralment of man's immortal spirit, the reinstatement of his moral nature, and the training him for everlasting felicity ; this would be what we should chiefly look for in the written oracles of God ; and this, I confess, it is, which, through years of serious examination, I seem to myself to have found in those very portions of Holy Scripture, where others think they see little else than doctrinal faith, and forensic justification.

You will naturally account this a very singular fancy ; and perhaps it may appear to you a pernicious error ; but it is less singular than you might imagine. If you have read Milner's History of the Church, you may possibly recollect, that Mr. Milner supposes, what he deems, the correct view of justification by faith to have been lost to the church from an early period, at least from the second century to the Reformation. In his account of St. Ambrose, he says, that the fathers, in those times, commonly confounded justification with sanctification ; though (he liberally adds) they, in substance, held the true doctrine. Ambrose (he thinks) is, perhaps, more clear of mistake in this respect than most of them. This is, of course, saying little for Ambrose, (as Mr. M. would reckon it,) and still less for the rest. But even of St. Augustin (to whom, not without reason, he has given one hundred and seventy-two pages) he is obliged to

confess that the precise nature of the doctrine of justification “ seems not to have been understood by this holy man, inasmuch as ” he perpetually understands St. Paul’s term *to justify*, of *inherent righteousness*.

I need scarcely say, that, while I sincerely respect Mr. Milner for his candour in so distinctly representing matters as he found them, and while I venerate the piety which acknowledged practical excellence in spite of supposed doctrinal deficiency, I feel myself under a necessity of differing from Mr. Milner, and of substantially agreeing with the fathers. I think, with St. Augustin, that, in St. Paul’s sense, to be justified, is not simply to be accounted righteous, but also, and in the first instance, *to be made righteous by the implantation of a radical principle of righteousness*. I deny not, that St. Paul includes the accounting righteous, in his application of the term ; but I conceive that, while, in giving it this latter meaning, he always supposes a previous communication of internal righteousness, it is, pre-eminently, on this communication that he dwells in those parts of his Epistles, which Mr. Milner, and so many others, understand as speaking (perhaps exclusively) of what they term forensic justification.

I accordingly am of opinion, that when St. Paul, in those well-known discussions, dwells upon the death and resurrection of our Redeemer, he regards them rather as the sources of spiritually mortifying and vivifying influences, than as a consideration upon which primeval malediction was averted. I do not question that he gave to this

preliminary effect of our Saviour's infinite merits all due importance ; that he considered it as an indispensable link in the chain of redemption, and, as such, makes it the subject of occasional allusion. But, to my understanding, his favourite topic appears to be the present saving efficacy of the dying and rising Saviour upon the mind and heart. It was, as it strikes me, St. Paul's settled conviction, taught him by inspiration, and confirmed to him by his own happy experience, that it was impossible to contemplate God incarnate, in his death and resurrection, with a divinely illuminated mental eye, and not, at the same time, to imbibe an assimilating influence (2 Corinth. iii. 18 ; iv. 6) ; and that, consequently, to draw all minds and hearts to the dying and rising Redeemer, as the fountain of spiritual life, of inward purity, of perfect love ; in a word, as holiness and happiness here, as the preparative and pledge of unspeakable bliss hereafter, was the chief end of his apostleship, and, of course, the object to which his labours in the ministry were principally to be directed.

In order to shew that I do not misrepresent St. Paul's design, I must content myself with adducing a few instances, which I purposely choose from those parts on which the favourers of forensic justification chiefly rely.

I suppose those divines do not regard any passage as more strongly supporting them than Rom. v. 10, where it is said, that, " when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." According to their construction, God is here supposed to be the party recon-

ciled ; and, of course, the reconciliation referred to, is taken to be that, which was, once for all, effected on the cross.

But, if St. Paul be resorted to for his own meaning, these words will require a different interpretation. In Coloss. i. 21, 22, he expresses the same idea ; but so expands it, as to shew that he speaks, not of reconciliation of God to man, but of man to God. “ And you,” says he, “ that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprouable in his sight.” It might almost be thought that, in this passage, St. Paul had taken pains to make his meaning unquestionable. Had he merely said, “ You who were enemies hath he reconciled,” the expression might not have been deemed conclusive, inasmuch as to reconcile enemies, is a phrase of latitude, which might leave room for supposing something to be done, on the one side, as well as on the other. But to reconcile those that were “ alienated and enemies in their minds,” can bear but one sense ; namely, to subdue and expel the hostile disposition. The alienation and enmity were in their minds ; in their minds, therefore, must be the reconciliation : and this our Lord is said to have effected, “ in the body of his flesh, through death ;” that is, (for the case admits of no other meaning), by an influence which flows from our Lord’s dying in the flesh, and works divinely upon minds and hearts, in correspondence to his own prediction, “ And I, if I be lifted up from the

earth, will draw all men unto me." These emphatical words could not be more happily elucidated than by what St. Paul here says to the Colossians ; and both passages unite, with countless others, to shew, that the great object of the Gospel is to bring the alienated mind of man back to God through the influential grace of the incarnate Messiah.

Can we, then, hesitate, in explaining the passage respecting reconciliation, in the Epistle to the Romans, by the more expanded, but strictly correspondent passage in the Epistle to the Colossians ? Whatever ambiguity might have been ascribed to the former, had it stood alone (though, even then, the forensic sense would have been more easily asserted than proved), its identity of import with the latter passage obliges us to interpret the brevity of the one by the fulness of the other. The enmity, therefore, in both passages, being inward and spiritual ; the reconciliation, in both, must also be inward and spiritual : and the death of Christ must, of course, be considered, in both, as producing that happy effect by an inward and spiritual operation on the mind and heart.

A further elucidation of the Apostle's meaning is found in what he says respecting reconciliation, in 2 Cor. v. 18, &c. The Gospel is there represented as an embassy from God, entreating human beings to return from alienation and rebellion ; and so far is the Almighty Parent from needing himself to be reconciled, that the entire plan of reconciliation is described as his own special work, and as involving, in the very first instance, a general non-imputation of transgression. In fact, God is

placed before us, not merely as waiting to be gracious, but as soliciting his creatures to accept the blessings which he offers. Their being reconciled, therefore, in mind and heart, is all that remains to be accomplished; and accordingly, is expressly stated to be the object of the apostolic ministry: "We," says he, "are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

But it may, perhaps, be thought, that whatever may be St. Paul's idea of reconciliation to God through the death of Christ, his view of justification, in the sequel of this very chapter, cannot consistently be made to bear any other than a forensic meaning.

I can say with sincerest truth, that, on this point, I wish to put no sense on the Apostle's words but that which best suits the import of his terms, and the strain of his discourse. Without carefully attending to this latter point, I conceive it impossible to understand St. Paul. He frequently carries on a lengthened chain of thought, suspended occasionally by long parentheses; but with so strictly renewed a connexion, as to make it unsafe to decide upon the parts, until we have examined the purport of the whole. I conceive, then, that, in order to ascertain St. Paul's idea of justification, it is necessary to take a connected view of all that he has said in the fifth and sixth chapters. Proceeding thus, we find, in the first place, that justification and reconciliation are either different terms for the same thing; or, at most,

different aspects of the same object. We come to this conclusion, by comparing the 1st, 9th, and 10th verses : the term, justified, used in the 1st verse, is repeated in the 9th verse ; and, clearly, the same idea which is expressed in the 9th verse, is repeated in the 10th, under the different term of being reconciled to God. Thus far, then, it would appear, that whatever has been truly remarked respecting reconciliation, is equally applicable to justification.

As we advance toward the close of the chapter, we find another, but certainly not different, idea of justification. It is, to “ receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness,” (v. 17). The nature, then, of this grace, and of this righteousness, needs only to be ascertained, in order to settle the question between St. Augustin and modern theologians. . In fact, the controversy resolves itself into St. Paul’s application of the term righteousness. If, by righteousness, he here means forensic, or imputed righteousness, then justification is a change, not in our character, but in our circumstances ; and the grace which justifies, is the mere exercise of divine favour. On the other hand, if righteousness, in this discourse, be spiritual and internal righteousness, then justification is a change in our moral character through the *communication* of that righteousness ; and the grace which confers the gift is not merely an exercise of divine favour, but also of that divine energy, whereby God is able to subdue all things to himself.

It is also to my special purpose to observe, that the notion of faith will be different, correspondently

to the different notions of justifying grace and righteousness. If grace be mere favour, and righteousness merely forensic, faith will, of course, be affiance in that favour, and in the cause from which that favour is believed to have proceeded. But if the righteousness be spiritual and internal, and the grace which confers it, of consequence, an exercise of divine energy, faith, though grateful for every step of the process, will most naturally regard our Redeemer as a present Saviour; and will specially cleave to him as the subduer of human corruption, and the healer of our diseased nature.

We have, then, merely to inquire into the nature of that righteousness, which justifying grace is here said to confer. On this question, I conceive, light is thrown, by the obvious parallel, in the 18th and 19th verses, between Adam and Christ. The 18th verse is doubtless obscure in the original; and is, accordingly, made out in the English version by those additions, which you perceive printed in *Italics*. I must observe, by the way, that the word translated righteousness, in this verse, is a different Greek word from that used in the preceding verse. In the expression, “gift of righteousness” (v. 17), the latter word is the usual term for righteousness in a moral sense, and by which St. Paul himself constantly means moral rectitude in other parts of his writings; whereas, by the righteousness of one (or as others render it, and perhaps more correctly, one righteousness), the idea is rather given of faithful and exact fulfilment, according to some supposed en-

gement or standard; a term, of course, most strictly applicable to Him, who, by fulfilling all righteousness, obtained, in the first instance, saving mercy for all; and has become the author of effectual grace and eternal salvation to all them that obey him.

It is, I conceive, the general benefit, obtained once for all, which is spoken of in the 18th verse. In spite of the obscurity, the extent of both results is undeniable. The offence of one, or the one offence, involved "all men" in liability to condemnation; "even so" (it is the Apostle's own expression, and most plainly marks co-extensiveness of effect), the righteousness of one, or the one righteousness, confers on "all men" at least the possibility of justification. All are asserted to be benefited; and less than possibility of justification would not be a benefit.

The 19th verse states much more than liability in the one instance, or possibility in the other. It describes, in both instances, an effect actually produced; and it accordingly marks a more contracted circle. It was "all men" in the preceding verse; it is here "many"—"As by," or rather through "one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so, through the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." In scripture language, the terms sinner, and righteous, so uniformly bear a moral meaning, as to make it hardly conceivable, that, in this one particular instance, they should be otherwise applied. Is there, then, in the passage before us, any just reason, why we should depart from the general rule, by rejecting the

moral interpretation? Do we not hold, as a truth of scripture, that all who act wickedly, derive their corruption from the vitiated nature of the first offender? and what more than this can with certainty be deduced from the first position of the text?

It might be shewn, that *sinner* is not the scripture epithet, even for all who habitually forget God; much less, therefore, would it be applied indiscriminately to all mankind. Copious proof might be brought of this term being used, in both testaments, to designate a higher class of irreligious men; that is, such as are not only negatively, but positively vicious. To say, therefore, that through the disobedience of one many were made sinners, is not to assert the universality, but to prove the virulence, of the original contagion; and, by implication, to enhance the energy of that counter-influence, which was to introduce rectitude into the place of such full-grown pravity. This act of moral power, both from the tenour of the passage and on a comparison with all corresponding passages, will, I conceive, be found the only natural sense of “making righteous.” And, if so, this verse establishes the moral import of the term, justification; for no one will question, that to justify, and to make just, are, in this discourse, substantially synonymous expressions.

But the strongest evidence of moral meaning in this 5th chapter, I conceive, will be found in the next verse but one to that just considered;—the 21st, with which the chapter concludes. There is, certainly, as much matter in this verse as could be

contained in a like number of words. We have, first, the reign of sin; which, before the Gospel, prevailed, seemingly, without control. We have next, the result to which the prevalence of evil tended;—death in all its forms; corporeal, spiritual, and eternal. We have, opposed to this dynasty of woe, the blessed effect of the Gospel: the reign of grace, and its invaluable results, immediate and ultimate; the immediate result, righteousness; the ultimate, eternal life.

Now, in whatever respect sin reigned, in the same respect must it be counteracted by the reign of grace; otherwise, the remedy would not be proportioned to the evil. But the idea of the reign of sin essentially involves the dominion of moral evil over mind, and heart, and life. Sin reigned in itself, else it would not have been permitted to reign by death. Could grace, then, be said to reign, except so far as it had overcome the antagonist power of evil? The grace, therefore, which thus reigns, must be, not merely the grace which shews mercy, but the grace which exerts energy; for where sin had hitherto reigned, it was through superior moral energy only that grace could acquire dominion.

Accordingly, grace is said to reign “through righteousness;” because nothing but moral righteousness, divinely communicated, could be the antidote of predominant and hereditary pravity. Through such righteousness, alone, could the reign of grace be established here; and it was equally necessary to ensure an everlasting inheritance. The grace which conducts to heaven can effect

that object only by qualifying for the place to which it leads. Without such qualification, we self-evidently look in vain “for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

But St. Paul’s elucidation of his meaning is not yet completed. The subject enlarged upon in the 5th chapter becomes, in the 6th, matter of moral application ; for which purpose, the idea of righteousness is resumed, and its strict import is ascertained beyond the possibility of question.

The 6th chapter commences with a new illustration of the leading topic, under the figurative terms of dying unto sin, and becoming alive unto God. This view is introduced, as if to obviate a misconstruction ; but it serves excellently to develop what may be called the interior of the subject, by stating the manner in which the grace, which reigns through righteousness, effects internal renovation ; namely, by spiritually assimilating us to Christ, in his death, and in his resurrection. But it is specially to be observed, that the Apostle, as it were, catches an occasion of identifying this strictly experimental process with his idea of justification, by using the term “justify,” to express the effect of the process : “He that is dead,” says he (that is, as the context shews, spiritually dead with Christ), “is justified from sin.” In our version it is, “freed from sin.” But the literal English of the original word is inserted in the margin. This single circumstance ought, perhaps, to settle the controversy ; for, how is it conceivable, that St. Paul should, in this place, use the word justify in a moral sense, if he did not mean that it should

convey the same idea in other parts of his discourse?

The practical inference from the view just adverted to (vi. 12), brings back the thought which had been expressed in the last verse of the 5th chapter; with this difference, however, that what was before described as a blessing, is now enforced as a duty. There, the reign of grace was announced as prevailing over the reign of sin; here, the enfranchised Christian is exhorted to assert his privilege, and not to suffer sin to reign in his mortal body.

But, as grace can reign only through righteousness, to this paramount topic the discourse returns, (v. 13); and the Christian, as spiritually reanimated, is urged to exercise the new life which he has received, in the manner which alone will ensure its growth, or even its existence. Having received "abundance of grace, it remains that, according to the exhortation of St. Peter, he should "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour," (2 St. Peter, iii. 18). Blessed with "the gift of righteousness," he is bound, as St. Paul elsewhere admonishes (2 Tim. i. 6), to "stir up the gift of God which is in him." But he can do neither, except by "yielding himself to God," as one that "is alive from the dead;" and "his members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

The theme, thus expressly resumed, is dwelt upon through the remainder of the chapter; and in no instance have St. Paul's unrivalled powers been, to appearance, more solicitously engaged,

than in giving, not merely clearness and strength, but grace and beauty, and exquisite arrangement, to this branch of his subject.

For proof of what I say, observe the curiously diversified combinations of the leading word, righteousness. In the last verse of the 5th chapter, "Grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life." In chapter 6th, verse 13, the members of our body are to be instruments of righteousness unto God; and in the 19th verse of the same chapter, they are to be servants of righteousness unto holiness.

The resemblance of these three expressions marks the sameness of the thing spoken of; while their difference shews the variety of ends to which righteousness is conducive, as well as of grounds on which it is indispensable. As a gift from God, and an effect of the grace of Christ, its object is to bring us to eternal life, (v. 21); as exercised by us, its object is to serve and honour God, (vi. 13). But this supreme reference serves our own truest interest; for, in yielding our members servants of righteousness, and in serving God, we infinitely serve ourselves; since the righteousness which devotes itself to God, in pursuing that aim, invigorates itself, and, acquiring a new and more excellent character, grows from righteousness into holiness, (v. 19).

Need I point out the beautiful fitness of these changes of expression? God, the giver of grace, and author of righteousness, in bestowing the blessing, seems to point every thing to the final happiness of man. Man, therefore, qualified, by

that blessing, for acknowledging Him from whom it comes, is bound, in the new life he has received, to make God his end, by exercising all his powers in serving and honouring his benefactor. But such is the exquisite order of things into which grace brings us, that God's service is not only perfect freedom, but, in proportion to its fidelity, it is its own growing reward, in, beforehand, bringing gradually into the mind thus occupied, more and more of that heaven to which it leads.

It is on this growing result of righteousness, as a matter of present and definite attainment, that the Apostle peculiarly enlarges; and, in order to speak with the utmost clearness and force, he calls to the recollection of those whom he addresses, what they had once been, that they may learn, by contrast, what they ought now to be. They had been, servants of sin; they were now, servants of righteousness. The reverse of service demanded, indispensably, an equal reverse of conduct.

To shew more clearly how they were to advance, the Apostle next reminds them of the means by which they had been rescued from bondage. But he previously lays the ground for making this recollection instructive, by introducing a term, not used before in the same connexion; namely, obedience. Yet he does not introduce that term abruptly. With an address habitual to St. Paul, but elsewhere unequalled, and seldom so much as attempted, he twice, in natural course, applies the word obey, as if to prevent any disturbance of thought, at obedience

coming in like a new link, in the chain of spiritual redemption, antecedently to the main idea of righteousness, and as the means whereby righteousness was attained. That this is the import of the passage, I need not take pains to shew; it can bear no other meaning than this—that, to come under the reign of grace, was to yield themselves to God, in a way of obedience, in order to righteousness, (ver. 16).

What, then, was the obedience by which the Christian convert attained to righteousness? No other, clearly, than that obedience of faith which is spoken of in the commencement, and described in the concluding sentence, of the epistle; and which both passages agree in pointing out as the primary object of the Apostolic mission, (i. 5. xvi. 26).

This sense of the term obedience, comes distinctly before us in the next verse (vi. 17th), in which St. Paul thanks God, that the Christians at Rome, the once servants of sin, on being made acquainted with the Gospel, had so obeyed it from the heart, that its doctrine was a mould to form them into a new character. “Ye have obeyed from the heart,” says the original, “that type (or model) of doctrine into which we were delivered;” probably alluding, says Doddridge, “to melted metal being formed by the mould into which it is poured.” We have here, then, beyond controversy, the true nature of justifying faith. It is such obedience, from the heart, to the objective faith of the Gospel—in other words, such an affectionate reception of the divine facts and principles

which the gospel propounds,—as alters the course, changes the character, and morally renovates the man : this is, self-evidently, obedience unto righteousness ; or, as it is afterwards described in this epistle, believing with the heart unto righteousness. And need I add, that we have here a fresh and most conclusive elucidation of the righteousness to which the whole discourse refers ? For, as obedience unto righteousness can be neither more, nor less, than believing with the heart unto righteousness, through faith of the operation of God ; so the righteousness thus attained, must, like its root and principle, be a disposition of the heart, a divinely established rectitude, which gives a pure and happy direction to desire and temper, to thought, word, and conduct.

Thus, the question of justification by faith receives a fresh solution. All agree, that to be justified, is to attain to righteousness. I must observe, by the way, that the nature of justification, and of the faith through which we are justified, is thus, by the Apostle himself, put once more beyond a question.

It is impossible to overlook the exquisite fitness of representing the gospel doctrine as a mould for the mind and heart, after the account of its mode of working, in the beginning of this chapter, (vi. 4, 11). The doctrine of the Gospel is, essentially, the exhibition of the incarnate Word, in all the instances in which he was manifested, but supereminently in his death and resurrection. These, therefore, having been dwelt upon, in the commencing verses of the chapter, as the source

of spiritual influence, and the archetype of spiritual assimilation, it was most suitable, that both the method and means of initiation into this economy of righteousness, should be so stated as to correspond to that immediately preceding view ; which purpose could not be better answered, than by entitling the Gospel “ the model of doctrine into which they had been delivered.”

But, in what respect did it serve St. Paul’s purpose, in an exhortation to improve the gift of righteousness, which the grace of Christ had conferred, to lead attention back to that first instance of obedience to the faith, through which the blessing had been communicated ? Because retention and improvement of the mental views, through which they gained their first spiritual renovation, could alone ensure their advancement : “ As they had received the Lord Jesus Christ, so were they to walk in him.” And besides, by recalling the feelings of that memorable time, when the day-spring from on high had first visited them, giving light to them that had sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, and guided their feet into the way of peace, he, as it were, tuned their minds for his exalted purpose ; and made it impossible for any honest and good heart to withhold responsive vibrations.

The next consideration by which the Apostle excites them, is the state into which they were brought. This is simply described as deliverance from moral thralldom, in order to their becoming the servants of righteousness ; implying, that they were so qualified for this blessed service, by that

invaluable deliverance, as to make them inexcusable, if they did not glorify God with their bodies and their spirits, which were thus doubly his—by creation and by redemption; redemption, not general and doctrinal merely, but personal and experimental, (ver. 18).

But why does St. Paul thus labour the point, and use, as it were, holy artifices, to entice them to their happiness? He intimates a reason, in the verse next following, (ver. 19). “I speak,” says he, “after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh:” as if he had said, I reiterate engaging motives, and multiply impressive images, because I fear all will be little enough to counteract, even in those who have tasted of the heavenly gift, and are actual partakers of the Holy Spirit, the tendency of animal nature, to loiter in the service of righteousness, and prove comparatively unfaithful to their heavenly calling. In order, therefore, to urge them yet more powerfully, as he had before contrasted the two services, he now draws attention to the degradation and utter fruitlessness of the one, in order the more to enhance the excellence and happiness of the other. Nothing, he intimates, could be more debasing than their thralldom; they had been the slaves of uncleanness, and their labour was as fruitless as it was despicable: they had not even the sad relief of variety in their wretchedness; they were servants of iniquity unto iniquity. “They sowed the wind, and they reaped the east wind;” yet they had but too steadily proceeded in their miserable course, going on (as also the expression intimates)

from one degree of iniquity to another : and their progress was not only steady, it was consistent ; there was no intermixture of good, no check from an opposite principle ; for when they were servants of sin, they were free from righteousness. The inference, then, was inevitable : being now engaged in a service as ennobling and happy, as their former servitude was vile and miserable, they should, at least, be as ardent and persevering in the one, as they had been in the other ; they ought, in all reason, to labour as strenuously in that work which increasingly repays itself, as in that work where all was vanity ; and their present freedom from sin could not, with any consistency, be less entire, than their former freedom from righteousness.

But, as labour is sustained only by the hope of adequate compensation, to this point the Apostle returns, and again avails himself of contrast : “ What fruit had ye then (at that former time) in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed ? ” thus, once more, compendiously bringing before them the extreme folly, as well as baseness, of their former life ; and thereby throwing it into the deepest possible shade, in order to add all possible force to the infinitely important consideration with which he meant to conclude.

“ What fruit had ye ? ” Try your former course by the plainest principles of common sense ; compare what it cost you in mind, body, and circumstances, with the base and brutish gratification which it brought ; and say, if you can, whether you were more befooled or degraded ? But, add

to this the dismal close : a life devoid of good, replete with shame, fertile only in disappointment, ending in the blackness of darkness. It is by this terrible, but true retrospect, that St. Paul impresses the Roman Christians with their present happiness, and urges them to avail themselves of the directly opposite advantages, which, in the immediately succeeding verse, are so perfectly, it might be said, so effulgently, displayed, as not to admit of further heightening, even from the inimitable pen of St. Paul. " But now," says he, " being made free from sin, and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

It is to be observed, that this is not exhortation in its common form ; it is not even confident prediction of what the Roman Christians will be. It seems neither mode of address suited the Apostle's ardour : he will not admit the thought, that, amid such aids and prospects, they will be wanting to themselves ; he therefore assumes, that they are what he would have them to be ; that they are not only " keeping themselves, so that the wicked one touch them not," not only devoting themselves, with undivided hearts, to the service of their infinitely gracious Master, but that they are already reaping from their labour an inestimable harvest : " Ye have your fruit unto holiness." To work throughout the whole of life, and look for compensation only in a future world ; to be engaged, while here, in unremitting conflict with enemies without and enemies within, with a seductive world and a deceitful heart ; and to expect no

quiet, until mortality shall be swallowed up of life, —has been thought, by many, a fair estimate of the most faithful Christian's course. But the few words just quoted, warrant a different reckoning; it is here made certain, that, even in this lower world, they who go forth weeping, and bearing good seed, shall come again with joy, bringing their sheaves with them. The prophet Isaiah had predicted of Gospel times, not only that the work of righteousness should be peace, but that the effect of righteousness should be quietness and assurance for ever.

How identical with this prophecy is St. Paul's representation of the service of righteousness, and the fruit unto holiness! The latter part of this divine prediction was too distinct and emphatic to be without its own appropriate verification. Such a verification could not be more happily afforded than in St. Paul's fruit unto holiness. This idea speaks for itself: it is impossible to question the difference between the labours of the spring and the gathering in of the harvest. The Apostle's words mark a similar difference between the work of righteousness, in which every sincere Christian is engaged, and that effect, or fruit of righteousness, which, even in the body, crowns cordial and uncompromising exertion.

This division of the Christian course into two gradations,—of righteousness and holiness, of labour and of fruit,—though, perhaps, not elsewhere, in the New Testament, so expressly reduced to a proposition, is, nevertheless, often recognised, and, in certain instances, solicitously pressed upon atten-

tion. Of this latter fact, I shall have occasion to give decisive evidence. I would now only observe, that the fruit of the Spirit, so admirably detailed in Gal. v. 22, 23, is obviously identical with the fruit unto holiness, only given in an expanded form. I ground this remark on the necessary import of the term fruit; which always presupposes work, and implies a remunerating result. In Gal. v., therefore, "the works of the flesh" are enumerated, to shew what, from the first step, were to be rejected by all who "were called to liberty" (ver. 13); which is equivalent to the expression now before us, of "being made free from sin." But the fruit of the Spirit is detailed to shew what, through a right use of their liberty, they were at length sure to enjoy. It was now their part to "walk in the Spirit," so as not to fulfil, in any instance, the lust of the flesh; if the lust was yielded to, in any respect, the works would follow. On the other hand, if the Spirit were permitted to lead them, the fruit of the Spirit, an assemblage of happiest mental qualities and powers would, at no distant period, and while still sojourning below, be their rich and indescribable recompense.

I cannot omit to mention, that the two states of grace, the lower and the higher, however seldom adverted to by modern theologians, were continually in the view of the ancients; and, from them, have come into our Liturgy; where they are recognised in a manner the most distinct and the most impressive. An exemplification of what the ancients thought on this subject shall be annexed to this

paper,¹ in the words (faithfully translated) of our own English Bede, the brightest luminary of the eighth century ; but such, avowedly, by reflecting the earlier light, rather than by himself affording any new beams. He is, however, on this very account, the fitter for my purpose.

The recognition in our Liturgy, to which I refer, is to be found in two petitions of the Litany ; which, together, present as just and well distinguished a delineation of the lower and higher state of grace as human language could exhibit. The former, “ That it may please thee to give us an heart to love and dread thee, and diligently to live after thy commandments,” is clearly meant to describe the merely justified state in which the principle of righteousness exists and advances, but has not yet arrived at maturity. In this lower state, therefore, love is guarded by dread (it being perfect love only which casts out fear), and constant exertion is considered necessary to secure rectitude of life. The latter petition expressly aims, not only at spiritual growth, but at confirmation and establishment. “ That it may please thee to give unto all thy people increase of grace, to hear meekly thy word, to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.” Here there is no mention of dread, because the meek need not be intimidated, and because the delicacy of pure affection is its own watchful guardian. But painful labour is also over, the faithful service of

¹ Vide the translation annexed.

righteousness is compensated, and, in some sense, superseded, by a spontaneous growth of goodness : “ Being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness.”

But the wise Apostle, in exciting the ardour of expectation, is careful to avert the hazard of presumption. He propounds an object of holy ambition, definite and substantial. Righteousness is to be cultivated in order to holiness ; and the expression, “ Ye have your fruit,” settles certainty of proportionate success. Still it is not said, fruit of holiness, but fruit unto holiness ; implying, that the utmost holiness which can be possessed is never to be rested in, but to be employed as the means of yet higher attainment. If there were not the reality of holiness, there would be nothing which could deserve the name of fruit. But, be the attainment what it may, it is nothing to that which still lies beyond ; and, therefore, though fruit, in itself inestimable, and in its effects delightful, in humility and wisdom it must still be estimated as fruit unto holiness ; as the means of advancing onward in the boundless space which will ever intervene between derivative excellence and infinite perfection. Thus is St. Paul, in his exhortation, at strictest unity with himself ; who, when he had attained the invaluable skill of suiting himself to his circumstances, whatever they might be, of not only being abased without depression, but, what is incomparably more, of abounding without being elated ; when, according to his own conclusive expression, above which no thought can soar,

“he could do all things through Christ,” which strengthened him : still, comparatively, and in the view of what yet lay before him, he felt not as though he had already attained, or were already perfect ; but, forgetting things behind, and reaching forth unto those things which were before, he aspired, with continually increasing ardour, to apprehend in its utmost fulness that for which he was “ apprehended of Christ Jesus.”

There is another remark which presents itself, and must not be omitted. It was observed, that the discourse which runs through the 5th and 6th chapters divides itself into two parts, answering to these two chapters : the first, containing the exposition of the subject ; the latter, its application. Uncommon fulness was then pointed out in the passage with which the expository part of the discourse closes. Attention must now be called to a correspondent fulness in the close of the application. The agreement, and the difference between the two passages, are alike admirable. They agree in this, that, in both instances, the leading points in each portion of the discourse are recapitulated with exquisite felicity, respectively, in each conclusion. They differ in this, that the entire design on God’s part is summed up in the close of the 5th chapter ; while the last verse but one of the 6th chapter combines, with the utmost clearness and force, the whole of the Christian calling.

How far I am founded in this comparative view, will be best seen by having both passages at once before us.

Rom. v. 21.—“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life.”

Rom. vi. 22.—“But now, being made free from sin, and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

In the former passage, we have, first, the usurper vanquished; next, the legitimate authority established and in exercise; then, the happy consequence; and, last of all, the glorious consummation. In the latter passage, the individual is first delivered from the vanquished usurper,—he is made free from sin: next, he comes under his legitimate sovereign,—he becomes the servant of God: next, the reign of grace through righteousness, produces its effect in the individual subject, who, in proportion to his fidelity, has his fruit unto holiness, and, pressing still more and more toward the mark, arrives in due time at the destined issue, “the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

It would be difficult to pronounce whether these two several applications are each, distinctly, more beautiful; or, unitedly, more impressive and instructive. I cannot but once more ask, how, in this union of lights, can we mistake the leading object and predominant theme of the everlasting Gospel of God; and into what other than a moral purpose can we resolve this rich accumulation of reasoning, imagery, and affectionate effusion?

A propriety in the latter recapitulation presents itself, which, though minute, ought not to escape

our notice. The term, servants of righteousness, which had been so often used in the preceding verses, here gives place to a nobler appellation—servants of God. Why? First, because they were no longer, in St. Paul's sense of the term, servants of righteousness (as now ceasing from labour and entering on reward), though they were still, and ever should be, servants of God; secondly, it was fitting, that, in this close of the discourse, the infinite end to whom all movements and purposes are ultimately to be referred, should again come into view; and, thirdly, a lesson is thus repeated, of which we can never safely lose sight,—that our perfection of virtue and happiness essentially consists in knowing, loving, serving, and enjoying God. And that, if it were possible for us to be as perfect within ourselves as the highest archangel, it would only so far constitute our happiness as it fitted us for union with the one exclusive and infinite source of real consolation and genuine virtue.

But there is scarcely a single term of this unparalleled writer which does not teem with meaning; nor a change of term which does not resemble that act of Jacob, in crossing his hands, when he blessed the sons of Joseph, which we are told he did wittingly. St. Paul had described the votaries of iniquity as servants of a hard master; who employed them, without remission or discharge, in disgraceful and unprofitable toil. He had, on the contrary, represented faithful servants of God as working for their own eventual profit, and directly deriving from their labour a more than adequate compensation. Having now to bring each course

to its termination, with literal propriety, he assigns wages to those who had served without return, and a gift to those who had already been compensated. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

To represent the tyrant Sin as completing the delusions he had practised on his votaries by finally rewarding them with death, is not only a suitable, but a bold and animated idea. It would almost seem intended to throw a shade of solemn ridicule into the self-destruction thus consummated, by shewing its absurdity to be as great as its criminality. In as few words, then, as it was possible to employ, the Apostle has given the whole case of the obstinate sinner. He himself is the servant of sin. His members are the servants of uncleanness (therefore basely occupied), and of iniquity unto iniquity (therefore fruitlessly and with increasing thralldom); and the remuneration he receives is death in its truest and most terrible sense. Through the often direct, always, at least, indirect, agency of the tyrant, amid tortures which he inflicts, and horrors which he excites (if stupefaction does not bring a still more horrible relief), the victim is plunged, in spite of effort, into the eternal gulf without preparation, and, therefore, without hope.

The concluding idea, on the opposite side, was not only necessary, as has been hinted, to suit what had gone before; but, simple as it appears, it is fitted to make a new and most interesting impression. To represent eternal life as the gift of God, was most suitable, because the servants of God

having, in reality, wrought for their own profit, the crowning blessing must, of course, be represented, not as a reward for labour, but as a superadded exercise of infinite beneficence. And, by being so represented, it bears a character which transcends all measure of mere remuneration, in proportion as the communicative goodness of God exceeds the limited virtue of man. A reward, though from an all-gracious Master, would still be bounded in its magnitude by an implied proportion to the service rewarded. But to represent final happiness simply as the gift of God, is to fix the proportion of that happiness, not by the right of the receiver, but solely by the power of the giver; it was to make it more than can enter into man's heart to conceive; endless as eternity, and illimitable as infinitude.

I have said much more on this most interesting portion of Holy Scripture than my particular purpose required; but I could not resist the inclination to attempt the unfolding of beauties which, as far as I know, have escaped observation. I do not feel, however, as if I had digressed from my own leading point. I conceive, on the contrary, that if doubt could have remained respecting the moral import of righteousness in the fifth chapter, every shade of doubt must vanish before the accumulated evidence which the sixth chapter has afforded; in the undeniable moral view with which the term righteousness is reassumed; the exclusively moral meaning which it henceforth conveys; in the rhetorical skill and philosophical strength with which the moral idea is expanded and impressed; the resistless force of the expression, "servants of

righteousness ;” the moral progress which this service implies, and the moral elevation to which it leads ; or rather, which righteousness itself, under a new name, at length begins to attain.

When, therefore, to these indubitable proofs of moral import, are added the correspondence which has been noted between the close of the 5th chapter and that of the 6th,—the obvious impossibility of disuniting the righteousness through which grace reigns (v. 21), from the righteousness of which the members are to be instruments unto God, and servants unto holiness,—the equally obvious identity of this righteousness with the being made righteous (v. 19), and this, again, with the gift of righteousness (v. 17), and this with the justification of life (v. 18), and, by consequence, with the being justified by faith, in the commencement of the chapter ; the whole discourse is manifestly bound together by a chain of moral thought, where no chasm is discernible, and the links are indissoluble.

From these clear and copious premises, I might now make my conclusions in favour of the view of faith which I embrace : but I need not prove by inference, what is already expressly established. The obeying from the heart, the mould or type of doctrine, to which, as Christian catechumens, or Christian converts, we are delivered, is exactly the definition of faith in which I rest. It implies, to my understanding, every thing for which I contend : for, once more I observe, if it be doctrine to be obeyed from the heart, it must be not speculative doctrine, but moral doctrine ; and if it be a mould or type

into which we are delivered, it must consist of assimilating facts and transforming influences ; not of abstract propositions, or general notifications.

I think I might rest my cause on the evidence which a single epistle, and that the supposed fortress of doctrinal men, has afforded. But the close examination of Holy Scripture is an engaging work ; in every instance tending to utility, but, in this particular instance (if I am not mistaken), of inconceivable moment, as possibly serving to throw light on one of the most deeply practical questions that can interest the heart ; and one of the most perplexing controversies which ever yet divided honest members of the Christian church.

This consideration induces me to proceed a little farther in the same path ; and to add to the above remarks on the Epistle to the Romans, a very few observations, of a like nature, on those passages of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which they, who require explicit faith in what Christ did once for all, conceive to be decisive in favour of their opinion.

It is agreed, on all sides, that the design of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is to compare the two dispensations, the Jewish and the Christian, in certain instances, in which they are remarkably analogous to each other ; and so to demonstrate the superior excellency and perfection of the Christian dispensation, as irresistibly to enforce, on its disciples, the necessity of proportionate fidelity and improvement.

A comparison between the priesthood of Aaron

and that of Christ; and an elaborate elucidation, on the one hand, of the inefficiency of the sacrifices continually offered by the Jewish priests; and, on the other, of the perfect and undecaying efficacy of the sacrifice offered, once for all, by the Redeemer, are, obviously, the subjects which occupy the chief part of this epistle. Christ is spoken of as an high-priest before the close of the second chapter; and this theme is adhered to, until, about the middle of the 10th chapter, it is made the basis of practical exhortation: in the course of which, also, there is frequent reference to the same leading idea.

It has, not without reason, been thought, that from this extended discourse we may learn the nature, both of the principal blessing which the Gospel bestows, and of the faith through which that blessing is individually attained and enjoyed. The attention of modern theologists has, accordingly, been much directed to this epistle; and they seem to have generally agreed in thinking, that the expiatory virtue of our Redeemer's sacrifice is the point principally dwelt upon; that reversal of condemnation, and reinstatement in the divine favour, solely on account of that expiation, is the blessing held forth; and that the faith which ensures an interest in this blessing consists in express and unreserved reliance on the sacrifice by which it was procured.

Could I join with these interpreters in their premises, I should, in reason, be obliged to admit their conclusion; but while I readily grant, that the expiatory virtue of our Redeemer's sacrifice is,

either directly or indirectly, recognised in every branch of the sacred writer's argument, — close and continued examination of this epistle obliges me to conclude, that the merely expiatory effect of that sacrifice is not the leading topic ; and that the last great act of the suffering Messiah is dwelt upon with another view, and for a yet more interesting purpose.

I confess, the more I have studied this exquisite portion of Holy Writ, the greater has been my wonder, that its leading purport should have so generally escaped observation. I am surprised it has not been adverted to, that the Epistle to the Hebrews, in all its practical applications, from first to last, instead of urging to ensure a personal interest in the saving grace of the Gospel (which, on the popular view of the epistle, would be the natural object), in every instance, exclusively enforces the going on to perfection. Those addressed are, every where, supposed to be already in a state of grace ; consequently to have attained, in substance, “the righteousness which is of God through faith.” The point, therefore, to which, by the most impressive considerations, they are incited to aspire, is strictly the same with that which we have seen placed before the Romans, namely, sanctification ; or, as it is here expressed (in union with the only means through which such an effect can be produced), entrance into the Holiest, by the blood of Jesus.

Thus, in the forcible expostulation, at the end of the 5th and beginning of the 6th chapter, the

charge is, not that of rejecting "the word of righteousness," but of being "unskilful" therein; of being only babes in the Christian life, and (as such) of needing to be taught first principles, when, for the time, they themselves ought to be teachers: and we are not suffered to doubt wherein their spiritual immaturity consisted; or what that righteousness was, in the doctrine of which they were unskilful. An express notification is subjoined, that, from not duly exercising their spiritual faculties, they were deficient in spiritual habits; and, of course, wanted that mental tact, by which advanced Christians distinguish, at once, and in every instance, between good and evil. Diligent improvement, therefore, of the grace they had received, and a comparative forgetting of things behind, through earnestness to attain what still lay before, are the points pressed in the beginning of the 6th chapter; and are never suffered again to go wholly out of view, until (after the doctrinal discussion which belonged to the subject) they become the matter of a most powerful concluding exhortation.

What, then, is the precise doctrine which the sacred writer blends with this exhortation; and by which he evinces both the possibility and the necessity of full-grown Christian virtue? Undoubtedly, it is the doctrine of the sacrifice of Christ; but in that special aspect which befitted the leading object; that is, neither merely, nor chiefly, in its expiation of guilt, but in its influential efficacy to cleanse and sanctify the human mind and heart.

In order to elucidate this most important point

the sacred writer draws attention to the fact, that, in the Jewish dispensation, the more solemn sacrifices had a twofold significancy ; the effusion of the blood having been, by divine appointment, the condition on which punishment was averted ; and the subsequent sprinkling of blood, the means by which ceremonial sanctity was conveyed both to priests and people.

Accordingly, all that was signified by this twofold shadow of good things to come, is represented as being substantially realised in the one great sacrifice of our Redeemer. The expiatory effect, however, is once or twice merely mentioned ; while the moral efficacy of our Saviour's priesthood, and the power of his blood to " cleanse," " sanctify," and " make perfect," are dwelt upon from the close of the sixth chapter to the middle of the tenth, where the final exhortation commences. From the ceremonial effect of the type, the sacred writer infers the infinitely greater efficacy of the antitype ; and, by the defects inherent in the one, he illustrates the glorious properties which belong to the other.

The chain of thought, which unites the several parts of this discourse, deserves our special attention. Christ, in his divine nature, is essentially and infinitely perfect ; but, having assumed our nature, in order that he might be at once the captain of our salvation, and the high-priest of our profession (the antitype of Moses in the one instance, and of Aaron in the other), it was deemed right, that, as these, he should be perfected through sufferings ; in order that, in both respects, as the prince and leader of his people, and as the high-

priest of his church, having been himself in all points tempted, he might be able to succour them that are tempted; and that we also might be encouraged by this consideration to come boldly to the throne of grace, for mercy and grace to help in time of need.

But Moses and Aaron, conjointly, are not sufficient to do even typical justice to this ineffable personage; another type, therefore, is resorted to, as that alone which afforded a shadow of the Messiah's mysterious dignity. Melchizedec, who appears in patriarchal history, as if for the sole purpose to which he is prophetically applied in the 110th psalm, and which, on that authority, he again so fully serves in this epistle, resembled our Saviour, not only in being, at once, the leader and the priest of his people; but having, as a priest, received tithes of Abraham, from whom Jewish priests were descended, this circumstantial superiority made him an apt type of that future, but infinitely more perfect, priesthood of the Messiah, by which the priesthood of Aaron was to be for ever superseded.

The perfection of the Messiah being thus asserted and illustrated (Heb. v. 6—10), this most suitable inference is forthwith made,—that perfection should be the aim of all who share in the benefits of the Messiah's priesthood and kingdom, (vi. 14). Than this, no higher duty could be urged; to this point, therefore, all his following observations are directed, like rays to their centre. Thus, when that most singular, but most decisive prophecy, "Thou art a priest for ever after the

order of Melchizedec," is again adduced to prove the predetermined abolition of the Jewish hierarchy, the necessity for the change is made to rest on this ground, — that perfection was not by the Levitical priesthood : and this assertion is further confirmed by the essential difference between the two priesthods ; that of Aaron having been " after the law of a carnal commandment ;" that of the Messiah, " after the power of an endless life," (vii. 11—16). Most justly, therefore, does the sacred writer go on to observe, that the commandment of the former dispensation was " disannulled," by reason of its opposite properties, of weakness, and unprofitableness ; " for," he adds, " the law made nothing perfect ; but the bringing in of a better hope does, by the which we draw nigh unto God."

Can I possibly, by any words of mine, add clearness to the moral import of this equally comprehensive and consecutive passage ? It is difficult to say, whether it is more divinely authoritative, or philosophically convincing. What, in the nature of things, could the law of a carnal commandment be, but weak and unprofitable ? weak, as a mere commandment,—unprofitable, as carnal. It could not interest the immortal mind, as offering nothing congenial to its spirituality, and interminable existence. In the power of an endless life alone, could the mind find an object suited to itself ; by this influence, and this prospect alone, could it be disenthralled from its captivity to flesh, and brought within the attractions of Deity ; which alone purify and perfect, because they alone satisfy, the heart.

Such is the obvious import of this brief, yet most copious passage. But as, in holding out such a hope, no evidence of its certainty was to be omitted, the sacred writer calls attention to a remarkable feature, in that prediction of the Messiah's priesthood, which he so deservedly dwells upon; namely, that the perpetuity of the priesthood is confirmed by an oath, while it is clear that the priesthood of Aaron received no similar sanction. Hence, therefore, is again inferred, the greater excellence of the Christian covenant, as being in the hands of a surety so much superior to Moses. And, as the extent of the Messiah's power, in this department, must be proportionate to the immutability of his priesthood, the consolation arising from both offices, is combined in one expressive conclusion: "Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Which words, I conceive, must be thus expanded: that as he himself immutably administers the better covenant, of which he is surety, his boundless power warrants our most exalted hopes; while his perpetual intercession dispels every fear, which sense of unworthiness could suggest, inasmuch as, through him, we may come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Thus far, on the evidence of the sacred text, I rest confident, that the supreme moral efficacy of the Christian covenant is the predominant theme of this elaborate epistle. I say the predominant

theme ; for I willingly repeat, what I have already most cordially granted, that the expiatory effect of our Redeemer's priesthood is never out of view : but, as in the text last adverted to, so in every other part of this epistle, the mercy which Christ has, once for all, ensured, ever opens the door for those supplies of influential grace, which he continually communicates. My object is merely to shew, that it is this latter point which constitutes, not the exclusive, but the leading topic. And, if my proofs do not yet appear conclusive, I must entreat attention to the sequel of the discourse ; by which it will, of course, be seen what interpretation best befits the whole.

The eighth chapter, to which we are now brought, commences, professedly, with a recapitulation of all that had been already delivered. The perfectness of the priesthood is, in the first instance, again asserted : but here, also, even more expressly than before, the superiority of our Saviour to Moses, as establishing a better covenant, on better promises, is not merely coupled with his superiority to Aaron, (than whom he is declared to have obtained a more excellent ministry,) but the transcendant properties of the new covenant are clearly indicated as the ground of the incomparably higher priesthood, (chap. viii. 5, 6).

Wherein, then, consists the greater excellence of the second covenant ? This question is forthwith answered in the words of a remarkable prophecy,—that, under the new covenant, in obvious contradistinction to the former writing upon stone, “ God will put his laws into the mind of his people,

and write them upon their heart ;” that is, he will so cleanse and renovate them inwardly, as to make it their very nature to obey him. Other blessings are added ; but this takes the lead, as being the essential point of distinction between the two covenants ; and, consequently, that with which all other advantages are connected, either as means, or as consequences, (viii. 8—11).

The next chapter, in pursuing this sublime subject, presents a new thought, of which it is impossible, within the narrow bounds to which I must limit myself, to give an adequate elucidation. I must, therefore, merely observe, that the light of the prophecy just quoted, seems to shew the sacred writer an emblem of the blessing it announces in the Jewish Holy of Holies ; inasmuch as the fulfilment of the leading promise would make each heart, in which it was accomplished, a living ark of the covenant ; and he accordingly intimates that the consequent privilege would be, to approach God with a nearness, not merely analogous to that which the Jewish priests enjoyed, but to that which was the prerogative of the high-priest alone. This admirable idea is distinctly conveyed in the eighth verse, where it is said, that, by the merely annual and solitary entrance of the high-priest into the inner sanctuary, the Holy Ghost signified, that the way into the Holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was as yet standing. This impressive remark can bear but one or other of two meanings ; it must either mean entrance into the heavenly sanctuary after death ; or, it must mean enjoyment, in this life, of such

predominant purity of heart, and, in consequence thereof, such habitual access to God, and apprehension of his sustaining and cheering presence, as makes the life of heaven, in some sort, begin on earth. That it is not entrance into heaven which is meant, will be seen from the commencement of the concluding exhortation, in which this idea is expressly resumed, and so applied, as to be applicable only to this world.

But, in reality, we need not look beyond the passage itself for a key to its meaning. The way into the Holiest, it is said, was not made manifest while the former tabernacle was yet standing. Why ? Because, as the very next words inform us, the former tabernacle was a mere temporary figure, the shadowy services of which could not make even him who ministered, “perfect as pertaining to the conscience :” in other words, the former dispensation did not make manifest a way into the Holiest, because the means afforded by that dispensation could not confer moral perfection. It follows, that, in the view of the sacred writer, to enter into the Holiest, if not strictly tantamount to attaining moral perfection, is the exclusive and inseparable privilege of the morally perfect.

“To be perfected, as pertaining to the conscience,” must, in common reason, mean, to have the mind and heart so rectified, as to be consciously at peace with itself, and with its God. St. John has declared, that then only we have confidence toward God when our hearts condemn us not ; that is, as the next verse explains, when we keep God’s commandments, and do those things

which are pleasing in his sight : by consequence, to be “ perfect,” as pertaining “ to the conscience,” must imply, in the lowest possible sense of the terms, St. John’s grounds of confidence toward God. Without these, according to this Apostle, according to all Holy Scripture, and according to the common sense of mankind, from Adam’s hiding himself among the trees, to the present hour, consciously comfortable approach to God, in any degree is impossible ; how much more, then, that near approach, and intimate access, which the sacred writer of the epistle before us dwells upon, as the highest calling of the already sincere Christian, as well as the distinguishing glory of the Gospel dispensation ?

In a word, the term *perfect*, is so predominantly the key-note, as it were, in this epistle, as to leave no room for hesitating about its meaning. When the idea is first introduced, with reference to man, in the exhortation to leave first principles and go on to perfection, it is unquestionable, that by perfection is meant full-grown Christianity in its confirmed habits, and substantially completed privileges ; and when, in proceeding to elucidate the provision for this progress under the New Covenant, the point dwelt upon is, the perfecting power of the evangelical covenant, and the total impotency of the Jewish covenant to confer perfection,—we are bound, by every law of reasoning, and by our respect for the sacred writer’s understanding, if even we were not necessitated by his argument, to attach an uniform sense to this ruling term. Can we, then, otherwise interpret it, from first to last, than

as implying that advanced sanctification of the inner man, which a faithful improvement of the grace of the Redeemer never fails to confer ; and which, by familiarising the mind and heart with God, gives, even on this earth, a growing anticipation of celestial happiness ?

But there is no need of reasoning, as the sacred writer proceeds to set the question (if it be possible) still more decisively at rest. It is to be observed, that, in the progress of the discourse, a twofold priesthood of the New Covenant is now brought before us ; the incommunicable priesthood of the mystical Melchizedec, and the derivative priesthood of his faithful followers, who, in Him, have spiritual access to the Shekinah beyond the veil. Though the term of priesthood is not used, the sacerdotal privilege is self-evidently implied, in admission to the inner sanctuary ; and, therefore, St. Peter designates the body of vital Christians, first, as a holy, and afterward, as a royal priesthood. The next object, therefore, is to shew, that this derivative priesthood is both qualified and sustained by the supreme priesthood, and, in a special manner, through the sanctifying influence of the sacrifice, which the great High-Priest offered once for all.

For the elucidation of this truth, the sacred writer directs attention to the practice which had been enjoined in all the more solemn sacrifices of the Jewish dispensation : in that, for example, by which the whole Jewish people (Ex. xii. 6, &c.) were consecrated to God, not only as a holy nation, but as a kingdom of priests (Ex. xix. 6) ;

in that which was offered on the yearly day of expiation ; and in those, generally, which were for purposes of purification. On all such, the sprinkling of the sacrificial blood was the instituted means of purifying, or sanctifying, both persons and things,—both priests and people. From the extended application of this divinely appointed type, the sacred writer concludes the analogous efficacy of the infinitely nobler antitype. “ If,” says he, “ the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God !”

In the former part of this passage, the sense cannot be mistaken ; every term which is employed, unites to shew, that the sacred writer derives his argument, exclusively, from the virtue to remove ceremonial pollutions, divinely annexed to the Jewish sacrifices. The argument, then, so derived, can have force only in proving some strictly analogous property in the subject to which it is applied : in this respect alone would the inference be founded. The morally sanctifying power of the one supreme antitype of all Jewish sacrifices, must necessarily, therefore, be the point which the sacred writer, in this place, means to establish ; and, by consequence, the purging of the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God, must be understood to mean the moral and spiritual purification of the inner man.

But, in truth, if these latter words had nothing to fix their sense but their own obvious import, this, alone, would be incontrovertible. The expression obviously alludes to the idea of priesthood, already intimated; and the purification in question, is to qualify for that office. The conscience is to be purified from dead works, in order that the person may be qualified for serving (as in his sanctuary) the living God. To be purified from dead works, conveys, in the first instance, an obviously moral idea. Dead works must mean all movements of the inward or outward man, which bespeak spiritual death, and lead to death eternal. To be purified from these, can mean nothing else than to be morally and spiritually freed from their prevalence and pollution; and to be purified from these dead works, in order to serve the living God, self-evidently describes the indispensable conformity of Him who ministers, to him who is served. Dead, and living, here are equivalent to the darkness and the light spoken of in the beginning of St. John's first epistle. "God is light," says that Apostle, "and in him is no darkness at all: if, therefore, we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." Similarly, living priests, who have nothing of spiritual death in them, are alone qualified to minister to the living God.

It is remarkable, that even systematically doctrinal writers have felt, that this passage would bear no other than a moral interpretation. I transcribe, with pleasure, the honest, though still inadequate comment, given by the continuator of

Henry; the sense of which compensates for the composition.

“Observe,” says he, “what the efficacy of Christ’s death is; for, first, it is sufficient to purge the conscience from dead works: it reaches to the very soul and conscience; the defiled soul, defiled with sin, which is a dead work, proceeds from death spiritual, and tends to death eternal. As the touching a dead body gave a legal uncleanness, so meddling with sin gives a moral and real defilement; fixes it in the very soul; but the blood of Grace has that efficacy as to purge it out. Secondly; it is sufficient to enable us to serve the living God, not only by purging away that guilt which separates between God and sinners, but, by sanctifying and renewing the soul, through the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, purchased by Christ for this purpose, that we might be enabled to serve the living God in a lively manner.”

It would detain me too long to shew wherein this interpretation, though true as far as it proceeds, falls short of the full meaning of the passage. Its language will not allow us to suppose, that the sacrifice of Christ purifies the mind and heart, merely as obtaining the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. Although these must, in every instance, concur, a sanctifying efficacy is distinctly ascribed to the sacrifice itself. This efficacy may, perhaps, be most simply explained, as the still advancing, and, by consequence, in time, matured operation, of those attractive and assimilating influences of our Redeemer’s death, which were adverted to, in re-

marking on the Epistle to the Romans. I would, therefore, make this additional observation only,—that, as the loadstone attracts and assimilates, not every metal, but that metal only which is congenial, yet still is not the less, in itself, attractive and assimilating; in like manner, the ineffable, and ever influential sacrifice of incarnate Godhead, continues to be, as it were, the attractive and assimilating magnet of all susceptible minds and hearts; while, both in commencement and in progress, the susceptibility is to be attributed to the animating and sustaining operation of that other Comforter, concerning whom the Redeemer himself has said, “He shall glorify me, for He shall take of mine, and shew it unto you.”

The import of this weighty passage, thus unequivocally established, gives additional confirmation to the moral construction of all that has gone before; inasmuch as it will be found, on tracing backward the chain of thought, that link so unites with link, as to evince continued identity of meaning. Thus, to purge the conscience, must be virtually identical with “perfecting, as pertaining to the conscience,” because the subject of the action is one and the same in both. Again, the “perfecting as pertaining to the conscience,” must be substantially one with that perfecting which the former covenant could not effect, but which the better hope of the Gospel does effect; because the act spoken of, in both instances (namely, that of perfecting), is, self-evidently, one and the same. Once more;—the perfection which was not by the Levitical priesthood, but which proceeds from the

antitype of Melchizedec, who has in himself “the power of an endless life,” is identical with the perfection which, in the beginning of the sixth chapter, is made the great subject of exhortation; because the perfection, under the second priesthood, connects inseparably with the better promise and the better hope of the New Covenant; and the Hebrews, and, through them, all vital Christians, are exhorted to pursue perfection, in order that they may inherit the promise, and have strong consolation in laying hold upon the hope set before them.

If we are thus compelled to admit the strictest unity in the preceding passages, we shall find increasing evidence of the same undeviating moral import in the remainder of the discourse. I have, on more than one occasion, willingly allowed, that, in this epistle, the expiatory effect of the great sacrifice is not overlooked; while I could not but maintain, that the *purifying effect* forms the ruling subject. In proceeding forward from the passage just considered, fresh ground is afforded both for the allowance and the assertion. “Almost all things,” says the sacred writer, “are, by the law, purged with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

In the latter of these two observations, though the assertion literally respects the Jewish dispensation; yet it may fairly be understood to intimate a parallelism, in this instance also, between the two dispensations. At the same time, this distinct mention of the two purposes, as proving an equal distinctness of view in the mind of the sacred writer, obliges us to understand him according to the

strict import of his words, and to apply his remarks solely to their definite object; which object again engrosses his entire attention in the inference which he forthwith makes from the aforesaid legal practice. "It was therefore necessary," says he, "that the patterns of the things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves, with better sacrifices than these."

Purification, therefore, is still the predominant theme; and, therefore, the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of himself must mean, not merely the expiation of sin, but its dethronement and destruction. The pious, but not always unprejudiced Doddridge, is compelled to attach this meaning to the words:—"Dr. Harris," says he, "explains, 'for the abolishing of sin,' of wiping out a score, so that it should be no longer actionable. But I think it extends to every method of abolishing sin, or putting it away; and may include, besides the satisfaction made to the Divine Justice, the subduing it also in our own hearts." The continuator of Henry also understands, by making an end of sin, procuring, not only pardon for it, but power over it. That the effect here ascribed to the sacrifice of Christ presupposes every other necessary effect, may readily be granted; but to put away sin, bespeaks essential abolition; and, in the light of what has gone before it, cannot be otherwise interpreted.

When, in the next verse but one, it is said, that Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, it might, at first view, be supposed, that

these words refer specially, if not exclusively, to the expiation of guilt. The terms, however, do not warrant any such conclusion. What our Saviour did for the purpose of expiation, is, no doubt, included; but the expression is as applicable to the removal or abolition of the sin, as to the averting of the penalty. And, having this latitude, its meaning, in this particular place, must be that which best agrees with the context.

That to bear our sins does not necessarily signify the enduring of the punishment, but may equally express the removal of the essential evil, is proved by the same figure of speech being applied in the Gospel of St. Matthew to our Saviour's casting out devils and healing diseases. We are told, that, in those acts of omnipotent mercy, he fulfilled the prophecy which says,—“Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.” With still more obvious reason, he may be said to have borne our sins, when, by extremity of suffering, he was preparing the only adequate remedy for the moral malady of our nature.

As, then, there is no reason why we should understand the offering of Christ “to bear the sins of many” differently from the almost immediately preceding expression of his “putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself;” so, in the sentence which next follows, and with which the chapter ends, we have evidence that the moral idea, conveyed by the words just quoted, has been uninterruptedly adhered to. “Christ,” we are told, “having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear the second time unto those

that look for him, without sin unto salvation." He shall appear without sin, evidently implies, that, at that second coming, nothing shall remain to be done respecting sin; and, accordingly, the second appearance without sin is expressly limited to those that look for him; that is, to those, in whom the first coming has had its perfect operation, as elucidated in the present epistle. For they who look for the second coming of Christ, are necessarily those who love his appearing (2 Tim. iv. 8); that is, they, in whom perfect love hath cast out fear; who, according to this epistle, have gone on to perfection; and therefore, according to St. John, shall have boldness in the day of judgment; because, "as he is, so are they in this world." It must be recollected, that, as this epistle dwells, not merely on the essence, but on the perfection of Christianity, it uniformly adapts its language to the height of its argument; and therefore, leaving to Divine Mercy those Christians of a lower stamp, who, "shall be saved, yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. iii. 15), it contemplates conformably to its great object, the sublimer destiny of those, to whom, having been neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of their Lord, an entrance shall be ministered abundantly into his everlasting kingdom.

I have thus given, to the conclusion of the 9th chapter, the sense which, being either expressed, or admitted of, by the words themselves, could alone preserve harmony with the antecedent context. I proceed to examine what follows; and I find my interpretation receiving new and irrefragable sanction in the very first verse of the 10th chapter.

The infinite superiority of our Redeemer's single sacrifice, to the multiplied sacrifices of the Jews, is here, as in the preceding chapter, the point to be elucidated. In the last five verses of the 9th chapter, the excellence of our Saviour's sacrifice is directly asserted; in the commencing verses of the 10th chapter, it is enhanced by comparison. As the concluding verse of the 9th chapter had stated the perfect result of Christ being once offered, as so abolishing sin, where the remedy is duly implied, that sin shall not appear again for ever; in the first verse of the 10th chapter, this statement is made yet more impressive, by the contrasted inefficiency of the old dispensation; which could never, with the sacrifices which were offered year by year continually, make the comers thereto perfect. It is obvious, that the sacrifices offered year by year continually, are here opposed to Christ once offered; that the comers to those sacrifices are also opposed to those who look for the appearing of Christ; and that, therefore, the incompetency to make those comers perfect, charged upon the Jewish sacrifices, supposes the excellence ascribed to the once offered Messiah, to be that of morally perfecting his cordial votaries: as if, however, it were judged expedient to establish, by superabundant evidence, this exclusive glory of the Gospel dispensation, and, most probably, from foresight of the reluctance with which this high prize of the Christian calling would be admitted, or even adverted to, the sacred writer, in the 2d verse of this chapter, so defines the perfection of which he speaks, as to make his

meaning irresistible. It is, in a word, *the being so purified, as to have "no more conscience of sins."* If it were possible to put this expression to the torture, neither force, nor subtlety, could extract any thing else from it, but the description of internal moral victory and peace. I need not attempt either to amplify or illustrate this conclusive assertion : it admits no addition, either of light or strength : it makes the necessary effect consist, not in being forgiven, but in being purified ; and in being so purified, as to have no more conscience of sin ; an effect which can arise solely from absolute suppression of the evil ; for were sin, in any measure, prevalent, there would be the conscience of sin, whatever might be the confidence or forgiveness. It is not, therefore, peace restored, which is here spoken of, but peace, unbroken peace, as the terms imply, so established through purity, with ourselves and with God, as to free from all disturbance for the present, and from all apprehension respecting the future. To be so purified, as to have no more conscience of sin, cannot be less comprehensively interpreted.

Still, we must not annex to these weighty words more than will consist with the tenour of the New Testament, and the infirmity inseparable from our mortal nature. We cannot, therefore, suppose such a purification as supersedes watchfulness, or discharges from the daily imploring of mercy, as well as of grace to help us in time of need. The language of the most perfect Christian on earth has ever sincerely been, and will ever sincerely be, "Who can tell how oft he offendeth ?

O! cleanse thou me from my secret faults!" But the very next words of the Psalmist intimate a privilege, the full enjoyment of which would seem to substantiate the case before us:—"Keep thy servant also from presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over me: so shall I be undefiled, and innocent from the great offence." With an animal nature like ours, no rectitude of will, perhaps no affection of heart, would secure from circumstantial aberrations. The most loving child may transgress, because it is a child; but it will be in slight degrees,—through weakness, not pravity; from inadvertence, not from presumption. In a word, the most loving child may err in a manner and measure, which will send it to its parent, cordially and humbly to crave forgiveness: but if love be perfect, it will never so offend, as to make it shun its parent's presence, for one hour, or moment. Such will be, also, *his* case, in whom the love of God is perfected. His "heart is fixed," because he is "rooted and grounded in love;" and, keeping himself so, the wicked one toucheth him not,—never seduces him to that which would make him, like the first victims of temptation, hide himself among the trees of the garden. Yet he remains, while in the body, liable to a thousand weaknesses, which his still uninterrupted intercourse with God makes him feel to be forgiven above, more easily than he can forgive himself. In a word, as St Augustin long since observed, the perfection of the Christian is a perfection of love. Whatever faults, therefore, are compatible with supreme, undeviating love of God, to these the most perfect Christian will still

be liable ; but, even under the sense of those faults, the consciousness of unimpaired and unabated love will preserve an uninterrupted consciousness of peace. He will not, however, on this account, relax in his efforts against his faults, any more than he will aggravate his faults into breaches of his relation to God. In a word, he will derive the comfort and the instruction which belong to his case, from those significant words of our Lord,—“ He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.” Intimating, that there is a daily cleansing necessary, in the state of most established purity ; but that, if this daily cleansing be only faithfully attended to, the inward purity will be preserved inviolate.

The sacred writer, having thus far applied the defectiveness of the Jewish sacrifices to the illustration of the one great offering made by the Messiah, concludes his argument, by bottoming all his charges against the Jewish dispensation on the immutable fitness of things. “ In these sacrifices,” says he, “ there is a remembrance again made of sins every year ; for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins :” that is, as the connexion of the sentence implies, the ceremonial effusion of animal blood could not, in the nature of things, so purify, as that there should be no more conscience of sins.

Though the evidences of moral import are already irresistible, I cannot refrain from enlarging on this additional consideration. It is obvious that, in urging the intrinsic inefficiency of the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins, the sacred author

appeals to the common sense of his readers: he means, of course, to submit a case which common sense could determine. Now, common sense was strictly competent to decide on the moral inefficacy of the blood in question; but common sense was wholly incompetent to pronounce on the expiatory virtue, which the Sovereign of the universe might be pleased to annex to compliance with any observance which he might be pleased to institute; for this could be known solely by express revelation; and, whatever the appointment might be, it demanded implicit acquiescence. But moral efficacy, as depending on the laws of moral nature, is matter of experience, and comes strictly within the cognizance of human judgment. It follows inevitably, therefore, that it is sin in a moral sense,—that is, sin in itself,—which the sacred writer asserts it to be impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away; and, by farther consequence, that it is the abolition of sin, in itself, which has been the theme through the preceding parts of this epistle.

But there is something farther intimated in this appeal to the nature of things. The sacred writer could not have employed human reason to decide upon the inefficacy of the sacrifices under the law, if he had feared its award, on due examination, respecting the inefficacy of the one great sacrifice under the Gospel. It follows, that the virtue which the sacred writer ascribes to the Messiah's sacrifice of himself was, though a divine, still an *intelligible* virtue; which it could not be, if its leading reference were to invisible and mysterious

purposes; and which it could be, only by its aptitude to act on human nature, conformably to the laws by which that nature is regulated; that is, to act on moral principles for moral purposes.

The sacred writer, in his comparative depreciation of the Jewish sacrifices, could obviously add nothing to the resistless charge of intrinsic inefficacy. In proceeding, therefore, to state the fact of divine rejection, he expressly derives this measure from the paramount defect just asserted. This, again, I must observe, establishes afresh the entire moral import of the argument; or, rather, it is the most direct and decisive evidence that the mind could imagine, of the revelation of God being a moral design, constructed on moral principles, and directed to moral purposes. The reason of rejecting the Jewish ordinances, and of substituting the priesthood of Christ, was, through the entire epistle, the point to be ascertained; and, after various grounds, all resolving themselves into solicitude for man's moral happiness, the want of all natural power in the antecedent dispensation to effect this happiness, is distinctly and finally assigned as the reason why the earlier system was rejected, and the dispensation of incarnate Godhead established in its room. "Wherefore," says the sacred writer, (that is, because it was not possible that the 'blood of bulls and goats should take away sins,') "When He," the Messiah, "cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings, and sacrifices for sin, thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come

(in the volume of the Book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God !”

Such, in the view of Divine Wisdom, was the necessity for changing the dispensation ; the effect of the change immediately follows :—“ By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.” Thus, as obvious moral deficiency induced the rejection, so perfect moral efficacy justified the substitution.

The sacred writer closes his train of reasoning by applying the substance of his preceding remarks to the establishment of his leading position ; and having, in the commencing verse of the chapter, contrasted the more solemn sacrifices, which were “ offered year by year continually,” with the single sacrifice of the Messiah, he adverts, finally, to what had been merely touched upon before (vii. 27), the sacrifices which were offered from day to day ; and, by shewing the striking differences which this instance also affords, he completes his comparison, and ends his discussion. “ Every priest,” says he, “ standeth daily ministering, and offering the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins ; but this Man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies were made his footstool ; for, by one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” It seems as if the sacred writer had reserved the strongest points of contrast for this concluding passage. First ; the Jewish priests are intimated to have been many,—“ every priest :” Christ is but one,—“ this Man.” Second ; the

Jewish sacrifices were the same, "oftentimes offered:" the sacrifice of Christ is one,—his own body, offered once for all. Third; the Jewish sacrifices, however frequently offered, could never take away sin: the one offering of Christ, hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Fourth; the priests stood daily ministering, employed, with unremitting labour, in what never could be effected: Christ, having perfected his work by the one great offering, "has sat down for ever on the right hand of God."

This animated contrast is, however, but a part of the matter which these few comprehensive sentences contain. We have, besides, the important fact of the natural inefficacy of the Jewish sacrifices reasserted. We have a striking recognition of the twofold dignity of our mystical Melchizedec, so frequently alluded to in the foregoing discourse, and so worthy of everlasting remembrance. As king, He expects, till his enemies be made his footstool; as a priest, He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified; and in these last words, respecting the consummate efficacy of the priesthood, we have the moral purpose of that priesthood so emphatically and definitively pronounced, as to attach to this truth invincible clearness and everlasting certainty.

But, farther, the recognition of our Redeemer's mystical kingdom is so made, as virtually to add to the preceding discourse all that was wanting to complete the glory of the Christian dispensation. It has been observed, by some of the most enlightened authors, that Christian redemption is twofold:

moral or spiritual redemption, accomplished in individuals; and providential or general redemption, to be effected in the predicted universal reign of righteousness and peace. To redemption, in the former sense, belongs all which is strictly Christian doctrine; that is, all that explains the efficacy of evangelic grace upon the mind and heart. This, therefore, being the express subject of the Epistle to the Hebrews, there was neither occasion nor opportunity for adverting to redemption in its more extended meaning; yet it was proper, that so vast a general concern, and so inexpressibly glorious a hope, should not be wholly unnoticed. In this concluding passage, therefore, it is introduced, not, to appearance, gratuitously, but, as it would seem, with most natural fitness; yet so introduced, as, in this completion of doctrinal instruction, to open a vista into the magnificent vastness of prophecy. The sacred writer conveys the thought in the actual words of that prophecy, in the second Psalm, which is, as it were, pregnant with all the prophecies which succeeded; for, however numerous and glorious, they are all comprehended in Christ's sitting at the right hand of God, until his enemies shall be made his footstool.

In stating finally, the effect of our Saviour's priesthood, the sacred writer, in some degree, changes the expression he had so often used before. Hitherto, he had ascribed a perfecting power to the sacrifice of Christ. Now, he says, that, by the one offering, he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified. To do full honour to our Redeemer's priesthood, it was not enough to assert its

effects on the Christian life, while in progress: that also was to be added which is to be accomplished at the hour of death and in the day of judgment. To perfect for ever, is to complete every thing which belongs to everlasting salvation; whereas, simply to perfect, according to the uniform tenour of the whole foregoing discourse, means, to purify, and morally confirm, the mind and heart of the Christian, yet sojourning in this lower world.

There appears to be, in the instances now referred to, an intentional adjustment of terms to each other, which ought not to be overlooked. Christ, as perfected by sufferings, perfects those who "commit their souls to him;" while he perfects for ever, as having himself sat down for ever on the right hand of God. There is a remarkable correspondence between these two modes of expression, and two significant sayings of our Lord, in his ever memorable prayer before he entered on his sufferings. First, he says, "I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth:" and then, he shortly adds, "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." The former words describe the nature and purpose of what our Lord was then about to do: "I sanctify myself;" that is, I submit to all which my mysterious priesthood requires, in order that I may thus become a living source of sanctification to those who receive me as the way, and the truth, no less than as the life; who come to me, not only "that they may have life," but, "that they may have it more abundantly."

To this, then, strictly corresponds the perfected Saviour perfecting his faithful disciples ; the great High-Priest, through the sprinkling of his blood, fitting his followers to enter spiritually within the veil. The latter words (the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them), with equal evidence, look forward to what was to be done at a future period. Our Redeemer's own glory, as the incarnate Messiah, was, at that moment, future ; the similar glory which the Messiah was to communicate, could, of course, be no other than future. But the Messiah's glory then commenced, when he sat down for ever on the right hand of God : and, most clearly he communicates this glory, in perfecting for ever them that are sanctified.

It might, at first view, be inferred from these words, that to perfect, and to sanctify, were different things ; whereas, from all that had been said before, the two terms would seem to have, in effect, the same meaning. This virtual identity, however, is not affected by the concluding sentence ; for though, to perfect the sanctified, would, on that supposition, imply tautology ; to perfect for ever them that are sanctified, would still be a consistent idea, as it would imply only the crowning the perfection which belonged to earth, with that which could be reached only in heaven.

The argument of the sacred writer being thus brought to a close, he confirms his own reasoning by again introducing the commencement and conclusion of the remarkable prophecy of Jeremiah,

which had been referred to before, respecting the holiness and happiness to be enjoyed under the Gospel dispensation. He seems to repeat this quotation for the purpose of remarking on its conclusion, as he had before dwelt on its commencement. The writing of the law on the mind and heart was then the subject of his thought; and now he calls attention to the total oblivion of sin which would naturally follow its complete abolition; and derives, from this last feature in the prediction, a confirmation of all which had been stated respecting the total cessation of offering for sin, and the eternal continuance of that glorious rest from labour and suffering, which the incarnate Messiah possessed at the right hand of God. "Remission of sins," therefore, in this place, means much more than when it is applied elsewhere, in Holy Scripture, to the case of returning penitents. It can mean no less, here, than that entire loosing from sin, and all its concomitants and results, with which the fully established reign of righteousness will be attended. As, therefore, the Apostle had, in the former instance, applied this prophecy as announcing the height of moral happiness and dignified distinction, to which each faithful Christian would, individually, be brought; so, in this second reference, he would seem to understand it as predicting the same effect being accomplished universally, through Christ's enemies being made his footstool; and the sacred writer, accordingly, now dwells upon that part of the prophecy to which the universal reign of righteousness can

alone give literal fulfilment; for then only will be realised (as Doddridge well explains the passage) that "great amnesty," and universal pardon, "which wipes out the very remembrance of all offences."

I am aware only of one objection which can be made to the scheme of interpretation proposed in the foregoing paragraphs. It will, perhaps, be said, that the antitype of the Jewish sanctuary, to which the sacred author of this epistle directs the hopes of Christians, is repeatedly declared by himself to be neither more nor less than that heaven into which our great High-Priest entered, after accomplishing the sacrifice of himself; and that, therefore, the entrance of Christians into the Holiest can mean nothing else, than their admission into the same bliss with their forerunner, when they have ended their earthly pilgrimage.

I admit that this objection rests on an apparent ground of fact. Doubtless, throughout this epistle, the sublime realities of Heaven, as opposed to the typical shadows of Judaism, are every where the object to which the sacred writer directs our view.

But it will not, therefore, follow, that the approximation to those objects which, according to this epistle, constituted the distinguishing privilege of Christians, is held out solely as an object of future hope. It is, beyond question, God, and Christ, and heaven, to which we are invited to aspire; not merely, however, as reserved for us hereafter, but as now spiritually approachable, by

the renovated mind and heart. Evidences to support this assertion, would be afforded by every part of the epistle. But the point is settled by the language used in the final statement of the Christian's privileges, by which the sacred writer enforces the concluding exhortation. After urging fidelity to the Christian calling, by the example of those who, under less favourable circumstances, had approved themselves both to God and man; and after deducing from the heroic virtue of those earlier witnesses a lesson, both of animated confidence and unqualified submission, the sacred writer returns to his favourite topic of spiritual access to divine and heavenly objects. As on former occasions, he heightens his representation by the opposite characters of the old dispensation; but in no other instance does he either so distinctly assert, or so effulgently illustrate, the incorporation and union with heavenly objects which faithful Christians attain through the Gospel, as in this unrivalled passage. But the most striking circumstance is, that the sacred writer describes this blessedness, not as to be attained hereafter, but as already possessed and enjoyed. He does not say, *Ye expect or anticipate*, but, *Ye are come* to the Mount Sion, &c. The opposite picture was that of the Jews, under the natural influence of their actually existing dispensation. The contrast must, therefore, be placed in the superior happiness of faithful Christians, under their actually existing dispensation. And the expressions give evidence of this intention: *Ye have come already*; not, *Ye shall come hereafter*.

But let us attentively examine the terms in which the exhortation to enter into the Holiest is conveyed. It is not to be disputed, that heaven itself was the ultimate object to which the sacred writer directed the views and hopes of those whom he addressed; and it must be allowed, that the greater number of commentators have supposed the passage to convey simply this idea. But though the comprehensiveness of the meaning be indisputable, the very first words are clearly more applicable to a present privilege than to a future recompense. Had this latter object been in view, there would have been an assertion of sure and steadfast hope respecting it, rather than of liberty to enter. The incongruity of such an expression would appear, if, for the Holiest, we were to read *heaven*. It would be evidently not true, that Christians possessed any such privilege. They have a well-founded confidence of heaven in reversion, but they have obviously no present liberty of entrance. To assert such a liberty, therefore, and, still more, to make this assertion the ground of an exhortation to approach, as if to enjoy the proffered blessing, would scarcely accord with either the dignity or simplicity of the sacred writer, in speaking of the future world; while, on the contrary, respecting a spiritual blessing, now actually within reach, nothing could be more suitable than to say, "Having liberty to enter, let us accordingly draw near."

But a more particular examination of the passage will shew the necessity of referring it to blessings to be attained here, rather than to those

which are to be hoped for hereafter. The very commencing word expresses present possession : “ Having, therefore, liberty to enter into the Holiest.” The privilege is already possessed, and, therefore, now to be exercised ; and the more so, because we have also “ an High-Priest over the house of God.” We have Him as the guarantee of our right to enter ; we have the one and the other, by the same title, at the same time, as parts of the same possession, for the word *having*, though supplied by the translators, is not repeated in the original ; and we have this priest for present purposes, it is over the house of God that he presides ; that is, over the church, the present mystical temple, in which, as spiritual priests purified from dead works, we are to minister to the living God (ix. 14), and, through Him, as our chief, to offer continually the sacrifice of praise to God, (xiii. 15). Accordingly, on these grounds, we are not to hope, nor to act, merely with a view to the future, but to approach, to come forward to that spiritual sanctuary into which we are invited. Such is the obvious force of the expression ; and it strictly corresponds with what is said in the preceding verse of the medium through which we are to come, namely, “ by a new and living way which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh :” the clear import of which is, that Godhead, as enshrined in the person of the Messiah, has not only become accessible to the mind of man, in a measure, until then, unexampled and inconceivable, but that the human nature of our Redeemer signally facilitates our approach, not only as veiling

those glories which, in themselves, would be insupportable, but as affording our minds and hearts a passage to the Deity within, as easy as that afforded to the High-Priest, on the day of atonement, by the curtain which separated the inner sanctuary from the place of daily ministration.

The beauty and depth of this representation might be most deservedly enlarged upon. There is scarcely in any other passage of Scripture, so strictly philosophical an account of the condescension to our weakness which the incarnation implies, or of the sublime result in the mind and heart of Christians, which is thus provided for and effected. Though this obvious and only intelligible meaning of the passage has escaped the great mass of commentators, it is remarkable that it has forced itself upon the discernment of Beza, and on the piety of Doddridge. "A new allegory," says the former, "is here derived from that veil which concealed the secrets of the sanctuary, through which, however, an approach was opened into the sanctuary:" thus intimating, that the incarnate Messiah shews to us, as under a veil, that divinity, the effulgence of which we could not otherwise have sustained.—*Nova hic allegoria instituitur veli illius quod operiebat sacrarii arcana, per quod tamen aditus in sacrarium patebat. Sic, inquit, Christi caro divinitatem nobis quasi sub velo ostendit, cujus alioqui fulgorem non possemus sustinere.* Doddridge, in like manner, after an attempt to explain the words of the text in the usual manner, makes this additional remark: "I cannot forbear thinking that it may further refer to the Shekinah being veiled

by this curtain, which bore so remarkable an analogy to the divine glory of Christ, as veiled by assuming human nature."

This obvious, I would almost say irresistible, import of the text being admitted, the application of the entire passage to the present privileges of the faithful Christian follows of course. The shrouding of the divinity within a human veil is so exclusively an accommodation to our mortal state, as of necessity to bespeak, not a future and heavenly, but a present and spiritual purpose. To enter, then, into the Holiest through the veil of Christ's flesh, can mean nothing else than such an attachment of mind and heart to the incarnate Word, in that view of him which the Gospel exhibits, and which remains the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, as brings our inner man more and more within that influence, which the Deity of the Messiah communicates through his humanity to all the living members of his mystical body; and which, as admitting of continual increase, in proportion to fidelity of service, and intensity of affection, must, of necessity, bring more and more of the bliss of heaven itself into the soul; and is, therefore, most justly identified with celestial beatitude, in the sublime representations of this epistle.

That it is this spiritual and anticipatory heaven, and not the literal heaven beyond the grave, to which the sacred writer directs our view, derives fresh proof from each particular term of which he makes use. To "draw near with a true heart," to the literal heaven, would be a scarcely intelligible, and certainly not an impressive idea. It

would be vague and uninformative to speak of drawing near to an object, unapproachable but through the gate of death, without giving some key to the meaning of the expression ; and, as a true heart, in this view of the passage, could mean no more than that general sincerity of purpose, which is essential to every stage of the Christian life, it would hardly be relied upon, by this animated writer, for approximating, in whatever sense, to so exalted an end.

But, on the other hand, if the Holiest be understood, as a state of advanced piety and confirmed goodness, a state in which the blessings of the Gospel are attained in their fulness, and enjoyed without interruption ; then, to draw near to this state with a true heart, will be in every point of view, a most apposite exhortation. A true heart will then mean, not merely general uprightness, but cordial desire, and determinate preference of the special object in view ; a disposition indispensable to effectual pursuit, and yet, according to former passages in this epistle, too likely to be wanting in the greater number, even of the sincere. The expression, to draw near, will also be as apposite to a high state of grace on earth, as it would be inapposite to the state of future happiness ; it being as easy to conceive our approach to a happiness which may now be attained, and which is actually held out as the certain recompense of faithful exertion, as it would be hard to imagine how we should draw near to that which is reserved for another state of existence. Therefore, because the object is accessible, because it is attainable

only by undivided affections and persevering zeal, we are to draw near with a true heart ; but, at the same time, with full assurance of faith, because He is faithful who has promised, and because we have an High-Priest over the house of God, who is able to save to the uttermost. Thus, the passage before us differs from a preceding exhortation to go on to perfection, only in being elucidated and strengthened by the truths which had been unfolded in the intervening portion of the epistle.

It is accordingly added, that, in approaching, we must “ have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” The first of these pre-requisites looks back to that remarkable passage in the 9th chapter, where the ceremonial purification, “ through the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean,” is employed to illustrate the power of our Saviour’s blood, so to purge the conscience from dead works, as to qualify for serving the living God. The purification which the sacred writer then declared attainable, he now enjoins as indispensable to ministering in the inner sanctuary. In this qualification, therefore, we have additional evidence, that the service to be performed, and, by consequence, the sanctuary to be entered, belong to the Church Militant. In the strictly corresponding passage, chap. ix. v. 8, the conscience is purged from dead works through the blood of Christ, in order, not to a future, but to a present service of the living God. In this latter passage, we have the same purification, for the same purpose ; to enter into the Holiest, being

only another term for sacerdotal service, in its highest exercise. The idea common to both passages is obviously that expressed by St. Peter ; “ Ye are an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God by Jesus Christ : ” and, by parity of reason, the “ Holiest ” into which the spiritual priests of the New Covenant are invited to enter with unrestrained liberty, can be no other, than that peculiar presence of God, which, through the grace of the Gospel, is accessible, even in this world, by the thoroughly devout in mind and heart.

In the remaining qualification, there is obvious allusion to the practice of the Levitical priests ; and particularly to that of the high-priest, on the day of expiation, who was enjoined to wash himself with water, previously to the putting on of his linen garments, in which he entered the sanctuary. The washing, under the Gospel, is, of course, figurative : but the subject of ablution is the same under both Testaments. As the heart was to be sprinkled from an evil conscience, so the body is to be washed with pure water : in other words, the rectitude which Divine Grace establishes within, is to be retained and improved by such external conduct, as not only repels the pollutions of the world, but renders all the members of the body instruments of righteousness unto God.

If it could any longer be doubted, whether the service to be performed belongs to earth or heaven, this last injunction sets the question at rest. It is, self-evidently, the spiritual sanctuary on earth, for which we are to be prepared in body, as well as in spirit. The offering of the body to God is

repeatedly urged as the consummation of our service in this lower world. The return of our mind to God, is that in which sincere religion begins. There is a sort of search for God in our spiritual nature, even before we know him, or aspire to communion with him. "Thou hast made us for thyself," says St. Augustin, "and our heart is restless till it resteth in thee." But our animal nature is, in itself, wholly departed from God, and enslaved to earthly objects. To bring this fugitive back, therefore, to its rightful owner, is the test and matter of the religion which belongs specially to us as fallen creatures. In general, the glorifying God with our bodies is represented in the light of a sacrifice: "I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that ye offer up your bodies unto God a living 'sacrifice.'" This offering is indispensable to sincere Christianity in its lowest form; for brutal appetites and passions can be subdued only by being slain, as it were, upon the altar of God, and consumed by that fire of divine love which never fails to descend from heaven upon the heart which gives itself without reserve to God. But, in the passage now before us, the body is raised to higher honour: it is more than the sacrifice; it is to take its part in the service. When not only the heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience, but the body washed with pure water; that is, when, according to St. Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians, the sanctifying influence of the Divine Spirit has extended itself through the spirit, soul, and body, then the whole man becomes fitted for the service of the sanctuary; and, according to the sublime

doctrine of this epistle, is admitted, not only to the priesthood, but to the high-priesthood of the Mystical Temple; assimilated to their Head, not only in unity of spirit,—but by walking as he walked, and being as he was in the world, they are made, in a humble measure, as far as in the nature of things is possible, partakers, both of his priesthood and sovereignty.

Such is the intimation given by St. Peter, when, having first described the body of faithful Christians as an holy priesthood, he afterwards calls them a royal priesthood: and he seems, moreover, to assign to this higher dignity a proportionably exalted employment. As an holy priesthood, they were to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ; as a royal priesthood, they are to shew forth the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.

We find, also, in the Apocalypse an express recognition of the twofold dignity: the spirits of the just, in their eucharistic song, ascribe honour to the Lamb; because he had not only redeemed them, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; but had made them kings and priests unto their God.

But the leading idea in the passage before us, is nowhere else so substantially repeated as in the conclusion of the 6th, and beginning of the 7th, chapters of the Epistle to the Corinthians. The corresponding features give evidence, not to be resisted, that, on both occasions, the same object was in view. It was remarked, that not

only a way into the Holiest was opened through the Gospel; but that, according to the promise in the prophet Jeremiah, twice quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the sanctified heart was itself, in some sort, assimilated to the Holy of Holies. The assertion, in the Epistle to the Corinthians, is nearly equivalent:—"Ye are the temple of the living God:" since, if the faithful Christian be God's temple, the inner sanctuary of that temple must be the heart. But, when the Apostle says,—“Ye are the temple,” he clearly speaks of what they were called to be, rather than of what they then certainly were; for the Apostle declares their dignity, in order to urge them to the correspondent duty: they could, therefore, consider themselves as actually possessed of the dignity, only so far as they were conscious of faithfully fulfilling the duty. But by what special duty were they to qualify themselves for their exalted vocation? By exactly the same preparation which, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, qualifies for admission into the Holiest,—“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved” (clearly intimating, that it was a blessing to be attained by fidelity, not rested in as an actually existing privilege), “let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” It is obvious, that to be cleansed from all filthiness of the spirit, is strictly equivalent to the sprinkling of the heart from an evil conscience: it is equally clear, that to be cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh, is the same idea with the body being washed with pure

water : and it need scarcely be remarked, that the concluding admonition is identical with the prevalent exhortation in this epistle,—to leave the first principles of Christianity, and go on to perfection. Both passages, therefore, unite in impressing the same infinitely important truth,—that they who are already Christians in sincerity and substance, are not to rest in that attainment ; but ardently to pursue and press after a still higher, and more confirmed state of piety, purity, and virtue : that this state is not only placed within the reach of Christians, but that it is the appropriate aim and object of the Christian dispensation ; distinguishing it from all former manifestations of the Divine goodness, and virtually identifying the spiritual life, thus attained on earth, with that life and immortality which will be enjoyed for ever in heaven ; that, accordingly, all the purposes of the Gospel meet in this end ; all its promises encourage to this pursuit ; and, above all, He who presides over the house of God for ever, has so provided for our success, that, if we are not wanting to ourselves, the result is infallible ; inasmuch as he not only is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him, but, in his one great work, has so facilitated the work which remains for us to perform, as to warrant this strong declaration,—that, by his “one offering, he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

Though the greater number of expositors have supposed the Holiest to mean heaven, some celebrated names are in favour of a different interpre-

tation. Among the ancients, Chrysostom conceives that the exhortation points our minds at once to heaven, and an advancement in spiritual things;¹ and he seems to have this latter import peculiarly before him, in his practical application of the passage. In more modern times, Dr. Owen strenuously resists the more usual interpretation:—"The privileges," he says, "which are here mentioned, being opposed to the state of things, among the Jews, which respected their present worship," it is certain, that what is asserted respecting those privileges, "doth concern the present worship of God, by Christians, under the Gospel. And they are, therefore, utterly mistaken, who suppose the entrance into the Most Holy, to be an entrance into heaven, after this life, for all believers: for the Apostle doth not here oppose the glorious state of heaven, unto the Church of the Hebrews, and their legal services, but the privileges of the Gospel state and worship only: nor would it have been to his purpose to have done so." I need not point out the substantial agreement of Dr. Owen's reasoning with some of the remarks in the preceding paragraphs. To what account the Doctor turns his superior light, when he resolves all the strong language and lofty imagery of the sacred writer into the common privileges of all sincere Christians; or how, on this supposition, he could account for entrance into the Holiest being an object for Christian believers to aspire to, and

¹ Τί φησιν εἴσοδον ἑνταῦθα; τὸν οὐρανὸν, καὶ τὴν πρόσδοον τὴν εἰς τὰ πνευματικά. [in Epist. ad Hebr. Homil. xix.]

not a possession in which they were to rejoice and triumph, are questions which I have, in effect, attempted to answer in the foregoing observations.

The continuator of Henry appears to follow Dr. Owen, without an effort, in this particular instance, to improve upon his master.

The pious Doddridge, also, follows Dr. Owen, in supposing the sacred writer to speak of spiritual access to God, through Christ, on earth. Avoiding, however, any express interpretation of the Holiest, or, as he renders it, "the Holy Places;" and probably agreeing with Owen, that the point to be elucidated was the superiority of the Christian privileges, collectively, to those of the Jewish dispensation; he contents himself with expanding the context into a general, though fervent, exhortation, to draw near to God, as thus rendered accessible, in all the duties and exercises of pure and undefiled religion.

On the joint view, however, of these respectable commentators, it is impossible not to observe, that, in this way, one of the most elaborate discourses, if not the most elaborate discourse, in the sacred volume, is brought to what, at most, might be called, a cold and common-place conclusion. To approach God through the incarnate Word, in order to worship him in spirit and in truth, and to glorify him with our bodies and our spirits, which are his, is, in itself, a subject of discourse never to be exhausted, and incapable of losing its weight, or its interest. It is the general subject of the Christian volume,—that to which every particular topic is subordinate, and which, under

one aspect or other, is never out of view : would it not, however, be difficult to explain the necessity of running so long, and circumstantial a parallel, between Jewish types and evangelical antitypes, in order to arrive at a conclusion, implied in the first and simplest act of Christian faith ? In what manner, it might be asked, are the general privileges of the Gospel elucidated ? by dwelling on the ceremonial of purifying the Jewish people, or consecrating the Levitical priesthood ; or on the distinct appointments of the two sanctuaries,—that without, and that within the veil ? Is not the honour of the sacred writer concerned, in our being able to point out some pertinent object in this accumulation of Jewish images ; and is any adequate object discoverable, in the mere general deductions of Owen and Doddridge ? Besides, it would seem that the first principles of the oracles of God must necessarily comprehend all the common privileges of Christians : yet, according to the sacred author of this epistle, first principles are to be left, in order to go on to perfection.

It follows that, in the mind of the sacred author, the common privileges of Christians, and the perfection of Christianity, are not one and the same ; for if they were, it would not be reasonable to speak of leaving the one in order to attain the other : we must, however, suppose the sacred writer to act upon his own principles in the sequel of his discourse. This subject is the imperfection of the law, and the perfection of the Gospel. First principles, therefore, according to

his own rule, must be left behind ; these, consequently, cannot be applied to explain the more exalted object of his present reasonings and exhortations ; and, by farther consequence, there is a necessity for some more definite explanation of the special purpose of this epistle, than that which is ascribed to it by Owen and Doddridge.

To ascertain and elucidate such a purpose, has been my object in the foregoing observations. It has been my wish to force nothing from the sacred text which it did not offer ; and to overlook nothing which, on an attentive and impartial view, it could be thought to convey. How far I have succeeded in giving a consistent meaning to the passages which I have examined, is not for me to pronounce. I have merely stated the grounds on which my own opinion has been formed : and I confess myself the more satisfied, because the explanation which I proposed, finds more or less meaning in every particular part, and attributes to the whole epistle an appropriate and most exalted purpose, provided for equally, or similarly, in no other portion of the Christian volume ; though, as I conceive I have shewn, expressly and beautifully recognised in the Epistle to the Romans.

I have now said all that I intended respecting the leading import of the Epistle to the Hebrews ; and I apply the result to the elucidation of the primary question, concerning the nature of saving faith, in the following manner :—

The soundness of faith depends on its possessing two properties,—intrinsic cordiality, and

objective correctness. The necessity of a cordial faith admits of no question. "With the heart," says St. Paul, "man believeth unto righteousness." Faith is correct with respect to its object, in proportion as it corresponds to the facts and truths divinely propounded for our belief, in their substance, measure, and purpose.

If, therefore, in examining the Epistles to the Romans and Hebrews, I had found our Redeemer's interposition in behalf of sinful man, elucidated and dwelt upon, pre-eminently in its expiatory aspect, I should have deemed myself bound to admit, that Christian faith, in order to be sound, must explicitly and primarily recognise what would have been thus made the supreme object of attention.

But when, on the contrary, I seem to myself to find the expiatory effect of our Redeemer's interposition (though, doubtless, never wholly out of view,) to be no more than occasionally adverted to: while the purifying, and spiritually animating efficacy of his grace and sacrifice, is made the predominant and uninterrupted theme of discourse; illustrated by every parallel, and heightened by every contrast, which the field of discussion afforded, and enforced by every possible form of affectionate address, awful admonition, and animating encouragement; what, in reason, can I conclude, but that my faith is to be correspondent to this representation? that I, too, am humbly and implicitly to take the great mystery of expiation for granted, as constituting an upper link in the divine chain of redemption; but that, in the

actual exercises of faith, I am to apply myself chiefly to the system of efficacious influence, and actual salvation, which I perceive to be ascendant in the sacred word ; contemplating, studying, and resorting to our blessed Redeemer, each day and hour, with every affection and faculty of the inner man, as the Captain of our salvation, who is able to save to the uttermost ; the High-Priest, through whom we obtain not only mercy, but grace to help in time of need ; the sacrifice of whose blood, not only so cleanses the conscience from dead works, as to qualify for the service of the living God, but, if rightly applied, delivers from the very conscience of sin, and, in one word, perfects for ever them that are sanctified ?

Thus, following the guidance of those portions of the sacred word, which, I conceive, my opportunity would have particularly urged me to examine, I feel myself to be brought to that very ground on which, at the commencement of these sheets, I confessed myself to stand : I mean, to a settled persuasion, that faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, as a present spiritual Saviour from the power and pollution of sin, is the most important ingredient in the Christian character ; for the want of which, nothing will compensate ; and which, if truly possessed and exercised, will either include, or produce, every thing necessary to a state of grace, or preparatory to everlasting felicity.

It may still, perhaps, be objected, that only two limited portions of Holy Scripture have been examined ; while the persons from whom I differ in opinion, equally rely upon numberless other

passages, as asserting the necessity of explicit faith in our Redeemer's expiation, no less than in his spiritual influence and efficacious grace.

My answer is, that I selected the two portions on which I have remarked, because I conceived them to contain, in the judgment of all, the most directly doctrinal expositions of Christian faith, both as to its object and its exercise, which are to be found in the New Testament. If, however, I were aware of any other passage being deemed still more decidedly in favour of explicit faith in our Redeemer's expiation, I would gladly make such passage the subject of an equally strict investigation.

Perhaps no text would more readily be thought of for such a purpose, than 1st Peter, ii. 24; where it is said, that Christ himself bare our sins in his body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, might live to righteousness. It will, on all sides, be allowed, that these words contain a compendious statement of the mystery of redemption; and it can scarcely be doubted, that they would be peculiarly relied upon, as proving the necessity of explicit faith in our Redeemer's expiation.

The advocates for such a faith would naturally conclude, that Christ is here said to have borne our sins, by suffering, in our stead, what our sins had merited; and they would, of course, consider our express belief of expiation, by vicarious satisfaction, to be made indispensable by so plain a declaration.

But a passage in the Gospel of St. Matthew has already come before us, serving to shew, that

to bear, in the language of the New Testament, does not necessarily mean *to suffer*. The text referred to (St. Matthew, viii. 17) tells us, that our Redeemer, in casting out devils, and healing diseases, fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says of the Messiah, that “Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses;” or, as our translators render it, “hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.” Doubtless, they who consider expiation of guilt as a primary object of Faith, would, at first sight, suppose these words decisive in their favour. Yet it is obvious that the Evangelist understands the passage otherwise; since in his application, it means simply, that our Redeemer relieved the victims of corporal calamity, by his own personal interposition.

Are we, then, on any ground, warranted to understand our blessed Saviour’s bearing of sins, in the language of St. Peter, in a more limited sense, than his bearing of sicknesses, in the language of St. Matthew? The concluding words of St. Peter’s sentence shew that he had in his view exactly the same passage of Isaiah; which, however justly applicable to the miraculous mercy of the living Messiah, received an infinitely higher, and more appropriate fulfilment, in the spiritual deliverance effected by his death. It is not conceivable, therefore, that St. Peter should apply this prophetic description to the deliverance of souls, in any lower sense than St. Matthew had applied it to the deliverance of bodies; which yet would be the case, did bearing sicknesses mean the removal of the entire evil, and bearing sins mean

only the removal of a partial and much less evil,—the punishment. Inasmuch, then, as our Redeemer's bearing of sicknesses, signified the absolute removal of the calamity, by an exertion of divine power; or, rather, as we learn in the case of the woman who had the issue of blood, by a sanative influence from his own divine person, we are more than justified,—we are, in all reason, necessitated, to attach strictly the same idea to the bearing of sins, in this passage of St. Peter. That the Apostle includes what was done in the way of expiation, is not to be questioned; but to confine the expression to this particular object, with St. Matthew's authority before us, is absolutely impossible.

It may be asked, whether the interpretation for which I plead will accord with the sequel of the passage? I answer, that no other interpretation would suit the Apostle's reasoning, or support his conclusion. "He bore our sins," says St. Peter, "in his body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." We have, in these words, the means of our redemption, and the purposes to which those means are directed. The means are resolved into the one great act upon the cross: "He bore our sins in his body, upon the tree." The purposes are twofold, corresponding to our twofold exigence,—our loss of the greatest possible good, and our enthrallment in the greatest possible evil. The death of our Saviour at once remedies the evil and restores the good. "He bore our sins, &c., that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." In dying on

the cross, he provided, first, for our disenthralment from the incurred evil ; and next, for our reinstatement in the forfeited good ; it being, in the nature of things, impossible, that we should enjoy the good, except in proportion as we are delivered from the evil.

Such being the clear import of the passage, am I not warranted in asserting, that the interpretation for which I plead, will alone suit the Apostle's reasoning, or support his conclusion ? According to his statement, the ultimate object of our redemption is, that we should live unto righteousness. This expression cannot be misunderstood. It distinctly means, the vital possession, and congenial exercise, of that moral rectitude, of which God is the archetype and fountain. To this result, therefore, the preliminary effect of death to sin must be answerable ; that is, we must so die to sin, as to be enabled and disposed to live to righteousness. Deliverance from guilt would not be a link proportioned to the chain. To ensure the end, we must be freed, not merely from the punishment of sins, but from their power and pollution ; we must die to sin itself ; otherwise we cannot live to righteousness. To tell us, then, that Christ bore our sins, in order that we should so die and so live, is no less clearly to inform us, that he so bore our sins, as to make effectual provision for these results : that is, so bore them, as to break the yoke of sin from off every willing neck ; and to bring all who are not wanting to themselves, from the thralldom of the carnal mind, into the peaceful dominion of inward and spiritual righteousness.

If the Apostle's reasoning were not of itself decisive, it would derive strength from the terms by which he expresses our deliverance from sin. The powerful language in which he wrote, could scarcely have furnished another word, so significant of thorough separation, and entire enfranchisement. He must, therefore, have chosen this word, to make his meaning unquestionable; to enable us, as it were, to look into his mind, and see, at once, the nature and extent of his conception. Such is always the effect of a peculiarly happy choice of terms; and a stronger instance would hardly be found, than that now before us. It is not possible to weaken the force of the expression, or to understand it otherwise, than of the loosing of every tie by which sin held us in bondage.

In ascribing this effect, therefore, to the death of Christ, St. Peter has, in one word, said all that is stated, with greater expansion, in the passages which have been quoted from the two Epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews. But may we not dare to ask, what other efficacy could he have attributed to the death of our Redeemer, which would have been proportionate, either to the greatness of that transaction, or to the depth of our spiritual necessity? The noblest purpose for which divine mercy could exert itself, was to restore to man the inward life which he had lost, and thus reunite his spirit to the source of infinite bliss; and this was an act as indispensable as it was glorious, since we may venture to pronounce, that by this means only, could omnipotence itself give happiness to a created intelligence.

But it may be asserted farther, that there is no rational meaning in the being freed from the guilt of sin, except deliverance from the dominion of sin be included in the idea. Guilt means, either consciousness of crime, or liability to punishment. In the former sense, we must remain guilty, so long as we continue to transgress. If we could even lose the consciousness of past offences, it would avail nothing, when fresh offences would, each hour, be accumulating fresh guilt. In this meaning of the term, therefore, it is self-evident that we can be free from the guilt of sin, only so far as we are consciously delivered from its power. The immutable nature of things will ever verify the oracle: "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

But if we take guilt in the sense of liability to punishment, we need only ask, what is the worst punishment which sin can incur,—the misery which crowns and consummates all other possible inflictions? Is it not the full prevalence of sin itself? the unrestrained dominion of that carnal mind, which is enmity to God? The present ascendancy of moral corruption implies death spiritual; as its growth and final consummation will constitute death eternal. The carnal mind will, in itself, be a worm which never dieth; in its enmity to God, it will be a fire which never can be quenched. Suppose, then, the chief effect of our Redeemer's death to be, deliverance from the punishment of sin, we come back strictly to the same idea; for how can we be otherwise freed from the punishment of sin, than by being delivered from the matter of this punishment—

spiritual death? What God speaks, he performs. A pardon pronounced, and not executed, is, in this case, inconceivable. Sin, therefore, being its own punishment, as naturally and necessarily excluding infinite good, and including infinite evil; the punishment of sin can be removed solely by destroying sin itself. Thus, were we left to explain our Redeemer's bearing of sins in his body upon the tree, by the mere dictates of common sense, without any elucidation from the context, or from parallel texts, in other parts of Holy Scripture, we should be necessitated, by the obvious nature of the case, to attach to the expression that spiritual and practical meaning which, I trust, has been established on more direct and explicit evidence.

It would not be doing justice to this most interesting passage, if we were to overlook the few words from the prophet Isaiah, which the Apostle has subjoined to his own: "by whose stripes, ye were healed." In this short quotation, St. Peter not only repeats the substance of his own statement, but conveys a new idea. He had asserted, that we derive life, the life of righteousness, from our Saviour's death. But life does not necessarily imply health. As in the natural, so in the moral world, there may be such a thing as sickly existence. The words of the Prophet, therefore, declare the perfectness of the life, as those of the Apostle assert its reality. We were spiritually quickened through Christ's death, says the Apostle. Ye derive spiritual health from Christ's sufferings, says the Prophet.

These words, spoken by St. Peter, would have been worthy of all acceptance ; but, as part of an ancient prophecy, they impress us with peculiar force. In thus alluding to so remarkable a feature in our Redeemer's humiliation, they evince, that every circumstance in that transaction was adjusted by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ; and that, consequently, no circumstance was without its use in the spiritual restoration of man. The death of the Messiah, in whatever manner accomplished, could be no other than a momentous event. But these words give evidence, that, ages before our Lord's appearance, the enlightened eye of a prophet saw him, as in distant prospect, conveyed through the whole line of suffering, from the garden of Gethsemane, to the grave of Joseph : and, in all this series of woe, saw nothing which was superfluous, nothing which was fruitless ; but, on the contrary, saw every occurrence teeming with salutary influence to the minds and hearts of those, who, in every age and nation, should take the Cross for their standard, and Him who died on it for their King.

Less than this we cannot deduce from the prophecy before us ; but the depth of its meaning is not to be expressed in human words : it is a study for the heart of him, who, like St. Paul, is crucified with Christ ; and can say, with that Apostle, that through the cross of Christ, the world is crucified unto him, and he unto the world. Yet, even to such, great will still be the mystery of godliness. The effects will more and more be felt ; and, as the devout man grows in

grace, he will grow also in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour. But the exquisite adaptation of our Redeemer's sufferings and death to the maladies and capabilities of the human mind and heart, and the profoundly adjusted instrumentality thus prepared for the use and application of the ever blessed Spirit, will afford matter for continued investigation and increasing delight, in a more advanced state of existence. If angels desire to look into these things, we may assuredly infer, that they will not at once unfold themselves to the perfected spirits of the just.

In remarking on this important quotation, I have not attempted to prove its strictly spiritual import; because, I conceive, it cannot be questioned. The being healed, is self-evidently a change, not in the external circumstances, but in the nature of the subject; and the application of the term to the inner man, accords with the strictest analogy. Sin is an evil in the moral system, exactly correspondent to disease in the animal body. It is the sickness of the immortal spirit; and the healing of this sickness can be nothing else than the re-establishment of internal purity and rectitude. The health of the body evinces itself, not only by ability for every natural exertion, but by an alacrity of performance, which, in some sort, turns labour into pleasure. Symptoms strictly correspondent, must concur to give evidence of a healed mind. When, therefore, it is said, that we are healed through the sufferings of the Messiah, nothing less can be meant, than that the passion and death of the Word made

flesh, impressed upon the mind and heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, are the one infallible remedy for the corruption of our nature ; and that, in proportion as we feel, and yield to, and imbibe this influence, we are not only freed from the diseases, but rise above the weaknesses of frail mortality ; and enjoy the foretaste of that perfect health, which the leaves of the mystical tree of life are for ever to diffuse in the future paradise of God.

We come then, finally, to this conclusion, that St. Peter, in this passage, contemplates the great mystery of redemption in the same light, of reanimating influence and purifying efficacy, in which we have seen it viewed by the other inspired writers already adverted to ; and, consequently, that the passage just considered expresses only more compendiously the sentiments which are expanded and elucidated in the Epistles to the Romans and Hebrews.

It might confidently have been presumed, that such agreement could not fail to present itself ; but, when thus manifested, what can in reason be inferred, but that a similar strictness of correspondence would be equally found in all other passages of like apparent import. In truth, it would be derogatory to the honour of Holy Scripture to suppose, that there should be, in any instance, a deviation from principles once clearly found to exist ; or, that there could be the slightest shade of discord between any detached passage and those deeply digested discourses which have been examined in the foregoing paragraphs.

It would not become me to conclude, that a more profound theologian than I pretend to be, might not, by possibility, be able to establish a different sense of the portions of Holy Scripture upon which I have dwelt: but, until a result dissimilar to mine shall have been arrived at, by means of an equally minute and consecutive investigation, I think I have a reasonable title to occupy the ground of which I have taken possession.

VENERABLE BEDE'S ALLEGORICAL EXPLANATION OF
THE GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE.

IF the altar of burnt-offering, of which we have been speaking, designates the life of the just in general;—that is, of those whose daily course is to crucify the flesh, with its affections and desires, and to offer themselves up a living sacrifice to God,—how can we more fitly understand the Altar of Incense, than as an emblem of the more distinguished life of those that are perfect?

Thus, it was not without reason that the flesh of animals was offered upon the one altar, or that incense was burned upon the other: for as, in the altar of burnt-offerings, we have the figure of those who walk not after the desires of the flesh; but, having sacrificed those desires to God, dedicate to his will, through the fire of the Holy Spirit, all their bodily senses; so, in the altar of incense, is exhibited the type of those, who, through a greater perfection, having extinguished and wholly suppressed all enticements of the flesh, offer up to God the entire affections of their heart.

In these latter, nothing of the flesh remains which can raise intestine war;—no remorse on account of sin, which can disturb or alarm. With delightful meltings of the

heart they anticipate their future rest; and look with hope to the time of their coming and appearing before God.

Thence the fitness of placing this altar in the immediate neighbourhood of the veil and of the ark. That of burnt-offering stood suitably without, before the tabernacle; because they whom it prefigures shine forth, in the view of the holy church, as examples of virtue to all: but the others, in the ardour of more heightened desire, sometimes approach, even while detained within the body, to the contemplation of future beatitude.

Justly, therefore, was the one altar directed to be overlaid with brass, and the other with gold. Brass is more sonorous, as well as more durable, than other metals; but gold rises above brass in splendour, as much as it sinks below it in sound. With reason, then, the brazen altar, on which flesh was burned and the blood of victims poured forth, gives a semblance of those, who, having subdued and sacrificed to God the gratifications of the flesh, resolutely persevere in that way of truth on which they have entered; and, by frequency of actual address, call others to walk in the same path: while the golden altar corresponds to those whom a more abundant grace illuminates with supernal brightness; but who, less readily, communicate to others those internal suavities which they themselves secretly enjoy; because, the more they are inwardly refreshed in the depth of their heart by the sweetness of God's countenance, the less disposed are they to publish their attainments.

There is a further propriety in the altar which excelled in richness of metal;—namely, that it was more contracted in its dimensions; and, accordingly, it is plain, that in the church, they who are eminently holy, constitute the smallest class.

LETTER TO JOHN S. HARFORD, ESQ. PREFATORY TO THE TREATISE ON THE EUCHARIST.

MY DEAR MR. HARFORD,

July 19, 1826.

YOUR most acceptable letter, of the 11th of May, found me actually engaged in a reply to your query, in a former letter, respecting the sense in which I supposed the term ἔμαθον to contain a notion of philosophy: and I also wished to explain more fully, in what respect I conceived it to differ from the latter word, μεμύημαι. I began my letter as soon as I was free from some indispensable matters which had occupied me; but the subject you have last brought before me, calls, I think, for more immediate attention; and I, therefore, hasten to give you the best information of which I am capable.

But I must not proceed without first thanking you cordially for obtaining me the sight of the Bishop of ——'s letter. I am deeply gratified by the approbation it contains, the spirit of it being such as I could alone seriously value. I return it, with many thanks to Sir Thomas Acland for parting with it. It strengthens my purpose (God willing) of prefixing an introductory preface to my tract, and giving it to the public. *When* I may be able, however, (from another engagement

which hangs upon me), I cannot conjecture ; as I advance with such a snail's pace in every thing.

The subject to which you turn my attention, I am scarcely qualified to write upon ; as I have never actually examined the volumes of the Fathers respecting it. The truth is, I was so completely satisfied with the quotations which I had met in trustworthy writers of later times, that I felt, as I thought, no necessity for going farther.

The impression on my mind has been, that the ancient writers of the Church, were agreed, in ascribing to the consecrated elements in the Eucharist an unutterable and efficacious mystery, in virtue of our Saviour's words of institution, by which he had made those elements, when consecrated after his example, the vehicles of his saving and sanctifying power ; and, in that respect, the permanent representatives of his incarnate person. But, notwithstanding this exalted estimate of the Eucharist, the notion of a literal transubstantiation, such as was subsequently introduced into the Western Church, would appear never to have entered into their mind.

I am brought to this conclusion, by the obvious fact, that those early writers always recognise the continuance, after consecration, of the same natural substances, notwithstanding the heavenly properties with which they have become invested. I need not point out to you the radical difference between this theory and that of transubstantiation. The latter notion, you know, supposes that the substances of bread and wine exist no longer ; that their outside form alone continues, and serves as

a veil for the flesh and blood, into which, through consecration, they have been transmuted. That such is the strict import of transubstantiation, appears from the remarkable words of even the politic Bossuet:—"Comme il désiroit exercer notre foi dans ce mystère, et en même temps nous ôter l'horreur de manger sa chair, et de boire son sang, en leur propre espèce, il étoit convenable qu'il nous les donnât, enveloppés sous une espèce étrangère."—*Exposition de la Doctrine, &c.* § x.¹

I need not tell you, that nothing like this has ever been found in the Fathers. Some few of them seem to have supposed, that the sacramental elements were so sublimated, by the divine purpose to which they served, that they were not liable to the entire process undergone by common aliments; but, as Cyril of Jerusalem expresses it (*Mystic Catechis. v.*), are distributed through the whole substance of the communicant, for the good of body and soul: and where I find this quotation, I am also informed, that some early writer, preserved in Chrysostom's volumes, and St. John Damascene, held the same opinion.

But, even this fanciful notion implies, that the doctrine of transubstantiation was not then known; as, if entertained, it would have left no room for such a supposition. That superstitious views of the Christian mysteries should more and more prevail, in proportion as the Roman Empire be-

¹ Since He desired to exercise our faith in the mystery, and, at the same time, to spare us the shock of eating His flesh, and drinking His blood, in their proper form, it was fitting that He should give us them under a different form.

came involved in intellectual darkness, was too natural; and, therefore, it is the more remarkable that the real tenet of transubstantiation should not have been propounded, until about the year 820, or 830.

It is very satisfactory, that this doctrinal revolution is sufficiently acknowledged by all Roman Catholic writers. They tell us, that Paschasius Radbertus, a monk of the abbey of Corbey, in the diocese of Amiens, was its promulgator. The words of Card. Bellarmine (now lying before me), are, “*Hic auctor primus fuit qui serio et copiose scripsit de veritate corporis et sanguinis Domini in Eucharistiâ.*”¹ And it is remarked by L’Avocat, with the candour which distinguishes him, in his *Dictionnaire Historique Portatif*, that “*Ce traité fit grand bruit du tems de Charles le Chauve;*” and he adds this remarkable fact, that, though Paschasius had, in the meantime, been made abbot, the disputes which his book occasioned, “*jointes à quelques brouilleries qu’on lui suscita, le portèrent à se démettre de son abbaie.*”²

But the most interesting circumstance in this conjuncture was, that Paschasius’s book had not long appeared, when it received a luminous and powerful answer. A monk of the same monastery, Bertram or Ratram by name, was required by the above-mentioned Charles the Bald, to state what

¹ He was the first author who wrote on the reality of the Body and Blood in the Sacrament, earnestly, and at large.

² This Treatise made a great noise in the time of Charles the Bald; and, combined with certain vexatious annoyances which were stirred against him, induced him to resign his abbacy.

he thought respecting Paschasius's doctrine. His being thus called upon, shews Bertram to have been regarded as an eminent divine in his day. He obeyed the call; and his work happily remains to us unimpaired and unadulterated. It is admirably written for that time, and manifests the author's close consideration, and deeply digested knowledge, of the subject.

Paschasius had maintained two positions, which he thus expressed: "Although, in the sacrament, there be the figure of bread and wine, yet we must believe it, after consecration, to be nothing else but the body and blood of Christ;" and the more clearly to convey his meaning, he proceeds, "and to say something yet more wonderful, it is no other flesh than that which was born of Mary, suffered on the cross, and rose again from the grave." Accordingly, two questions were proposed to Bertram. 1st, Whether "*Quod in Ecclesiâ ore fidelium sumitur, Corpus et Sanguis Christi in mysterio fiat, an in veritate?*"¹ 2d, "*Utrum ipsum Corpus sit quod de Mariâ natum est, et passum, mortuum et sepultum, quodque resurgens, et cœlos ascendens, ad dextram Patris consideat?*"² These two points, therefore, form the subject of Bertram's discourse: he first shews, from the nature and import of the institution, that the Eucharist contains not the physical verity, but the

¹ Whether the Body and Blood of Christ, which is in the Church received by the mouths of the Faithful, be such, in a mystery, or in Truth?

² Whether it be the same Body which was born of Mary, and suffered, died, and was buried, and, rising again, and ascending into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father?

spiritual mystery, of our Saviour's body and blood ; and then proceeds to expose the utter absurdity of imagining that the natural body, and the eucharistical body, are one and the same. In this second part of his work, he strongly supports himself by quotations from St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Isidore, Fulgentius, and, above all, from St. Augustin ; and, from this concurrent evidence, triumphantly establishes his agreement with the judgment of the Catholic church.

I cannot but regard this little work as a signal link in the mysterious chain of Providence. When it pleased the wisdom of Heaven to permit the introduction of that monstrous novelty, transubstantiation, it was of infinite importance that provision should have been made for exposing the fabricated error, and ascertaining the Catholic truth, in some direct and unfallacious way, so soon as minds should arise fitted for such an investigation. I suppose it would be impossible to imagine a more adequate expedient for such a purpose, than the powerful protest, and perspicuous memorial, of Bertram, so imperatively required, and so opportunely furnished. That it should have had little effect at the time, was but natural, considering the general state of the Western church. What St. Peter says of the ancient prophets, that, " not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto us ; " so, in a certain sense, may be said of Bertram's treatise. Still, it cannot be doubted, that, even in those days of darkness, the rallying point thus afforded to such as desired to stand in the ways,

and see, and ask for the old paths (Jer. vi. 16), was by no means neglected. Of this we have an interesting proof, in the Saxon Homily for Easter, which is inserted in the 2d volume of Fox's Acts and Monuments; and which is said to have been translated into that language, from the Latin, about the year 970, by Ælfric, Abbot of Malmesbury. This curious discourse, though, in its present form, more than a century later than Bertram's book, not only maintains the same doctrine, but, in most of its leading passages, is strictly copied from Bertram. It seems, however, that, after the tenth century, the new opinion became predominant; until, at length, in the fourth council of Lateran (1215), under Innocent the Third, it was formally adopted as the established doctrine of the church; and, to prevent the possibility of evading its grossest sense, it was designated by the new term of transubstantiation; in order that there might be a convenient verbal test for detecting heretics at once, without the trouble of discussion.

An English translator of Bertram, who has also given the original, and prefixed a very useful preliminary discourse, thus summarily describes his author's view:—"Ratramnus determines, that the words of our Saviour, in the institution of the holy Eucharist, are not to be taken properly, but figuratively; and that the consecrated elements, orally received by the faithful, are not the true body of Christ, but the figure and sacrament of it; though not mere empty figures, or naked signs, void of all efficacy; but such as, through the blessing annexed to our Saviour's institution,

and the powerful operation of the Spirit of Christ, working in and by those sacred figures, is the communion of the body and blood of Christ." That you may judge of the fairness of this statement, I will give you one passage from Bertram himself:—"In Sacramento Corporis et Sanguinis Domini, quicquid exterius sumitur, ad corporis refectionem aptatur. Verbum autem Dei, qui est panis invisibilis, invisibiliter in illo existens Sacramento, invisibiliter, participatione sui, fidelium mentes vivificando pascit."¹

The Reformation naturally brought this long neglected tract to light; and several editions of it were printed in Cologne, Basle, Geneva, and elsewhere. The Protestants triumphed in being able to produce such a refutation of the claim to antiquity set up by their opponents: and to these latter it seemed, at first, the readiest expedient to reject Bertram's book as spurious, and got up for the occasion. But they were beaten off this ground by indubitable proofs of its authenticity. Copies of it were found to exist, of a date far anterior to the Reformation; and where none but Roman Catholics could have had access. At length it was republished by themselves; and, to the honour of its editor, in an unadulterated form; accompanied, however, with every possible ingenious effort to prove its Roman Catholic

¹ In the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood, whatsoever is outwardly received, serves only for the refreshment of the body. But the Word of God, who is the invisible bread, being invisibly in the Sacrament, doth, in an invisible manner, nourish and quicken the souls of the faithful, by their partaking thereof.

orthodoxy. "Cet ouvrage," says l'Avocat, "parut d'abord favorable à l'erreur des Protestants, sur la réalité du corps de J. C. dans l'Euchariste; ce qui porta plusieurs savans à le regarder comme un livre hérétique et supposé. Mais le père Mabillon en montra clairement, dans la suite, l'authenticité. M. Boileau, docteur de Sorbonne, qui en a donné une excellente édition, en Latin et en François, prouve que l'ouvrage est orthodoxe."¹ The honesty of this last position I doubt not; as to its correctness, impartial common sense will determine.

It is remarkable, however, that Bellarmine (whose estimate of Paschasius's work I have already quoted) was so far from accounting Bertram's treatise to be orthodox, that he has not deigned to give its author a place amongst his "*Scriptores Ecclesiastici*;"² though, in remarking on the works of St. Augustin, he expressly refers to Bertram's book for evidence, that a particular tract was written, not by St. Augustin, but by Fulgentius. But it is still more worthy of notice, that, to lessen the authority of Bertram's work, and to add strength to that of Paschasius, Bellarmine (it would seem knowingly) misrepresents fact,

¹ This work appeared at first to favour the error of the Protestants, concerning the real presence of the body of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist; a circumstance which induced many learned men to regard the book as heretical and supposititious. But Father Mabillon, subsequently, established its authenticity beyond dispute. M. Boileau, Doctor of the Sorbonne, who gave an excellent edition of it in Latin and French, proves that the work is orthodox.

² A small volume, containing an enumeration, and brief characters, of all Catholic writers: its title is, "*De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis*."

by stating, that Paschasius's tract was written to oppose the new doctrine of Bertram, instead of Bertram's treatise being written to repel the innovation of Paschasius. After the words which I transcribed above, he adds, "*contra Bertramum Presbyterum, qui fuit ex primis qui eam (veritatem corporis et sanguinis, &c.) in dubium revocarent.*"¹ I give you this curious misrepresentation as I find it, because it seems, itself, to speak a volume. I lament to find it in Bellarmine; as, in his early days, at least, he was a pious man. Unfortunately, the Roman Catholic Religion does not inspire, though it does not always destroy, a love of truth.

L'Avocat, on the other hand, being far above such wretched subterfuges, states the matter as it was: "*Ce traité,*" says he (that of Paschasius), "*fit grand bruit, &c.; et Bertram, autrement Ratramme, et quelques autres, écrivèrent contre Paschase Radbert.*"²

I advise you to get Bertram's tract (which I shall have occasion to return to before I end my letter); but I could greatly wish you to have, also, Mons. L'Arroque's History of the Eucharist. A very satisfactory translation of this work, published in London, 1684, lies now before me; and I suppose you could easily procure it from sellers of old books. It is not a book to be read from beginning to end; but the "Table of Chapters"

¹ Against Bertram, a priest, who was one of the first that called the reality of the body and blood in question.

² This Treatise made a great noise; and Bertram, or Ratram, and some others, wrote against Paschasius Radbertus.

will lead you to what is worthy of attention. The author cannot be suspected of any ultra-Catholic prejudice, being himself a French Protestant; yet he seems so honestly intent on telling the truth, and nothing but the truth, as to raise a high idea both of the weight of his evidence, and of his own upright disposition.

He enters, at large, into the very point on which you wish for satisfaction. A large part of his work is occupied in examining and ascertaining what the ancient Fathers thought on the subject of the Eucharist; and it seems to me, that the inquiry could not have been pursued with stricter attention, or with more Christian candour.

As you may not at once find L'Arroque, I will give you an extract from his preface; which, at the same time, shews the spirit with which he prosecuted his subject, and the impression left upon his mind, by his close and extensive investigation.

“The first thing to be done,” he says, “when we set about reading the monuments, which we still enjoy, of ecclesiastical antiquity, is, well to examine ourselves to see whether we be free from all kinds of pre-occupation. For, provided we bring unto this study nothing of our own, but attention, and a sincere desire of knowing the truth, we shall gather fruits full of consolation and joy; and we shall doubtless discover what has been the belief of those ancient doctors upon the point which we examine. Secondly, great heed must be taken not to separate what God hath joined together; I mean, the nature and the matter of the symbols, from their efficacy, and from their

virtue in their lawful use : for then, these things are inseparable, although they be different one from another ; for the nature of bread and wine is one thing, and the grace and virtue which the consecration addeth to their nature is another thing ; and therefore it is, that the holy Fathers speak not so honourably of the sacrament, when they consider the substance of the symbols, as when they regard their efficacy and virtue. And, indeed, when they have a design to represent this efficacy, they make use of the loftiest and most magnificent expressions to raise the dignity of this mystery, and to make us conceive a grand idea of it."

I think you will consider this last remark, in particular, as applying to the matter which you wish to have cleared up ; but that you may more fully understand L'Arroque's meaning, I must transcribe what he says elsewhere, in the same preface, respecting the exact notion of the eucharistical mystery entertained by the ancient Fathers. His words are : " And, indeed, not to leave their doctrine exposed unto the strokes of calumny, they declare, that if the Eucharist be a figure and an image, it is not a bare figure, or an image, without operation ; but a figure, an image, and a sacrament, replenished with all the virtue, and all the efficacy, of the body and blood of our blessed Saviour ; clothed, if it may be so said, with the majesty of his person ; and accompanied, in the lawful celebration, with all the fruits, and with all the benefits, of his death and sufferings."

To these extracts from L'Arroque's preface, I cannot help adding the two-fold conclusion which

he deduces (part ii. chap. 3) from a copious induction of passages most directly bearing upon the subject.

“ From all these considerations of the holy Fathers, which we have alleged, there result two doctrines from their writings, both which have been their foundation for the virtue and efficacy which they attribute unto the Sacrament: the first is, that they regard it as a sacrament which not only barely signifies, but which also exhibits and communicates unto the believing soul the thing which it signifies; I mean the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The second doctrine which results from the hypothesis of the Fathers is, that, considering that the death of Christ is the cause of our life, which life consists in the sanctification of our souls, by means whereof we have communion with God, which is the lively fountain of life (and, therefore, before conversion we are said to be dead), they have attributed unto the sacrament the virtue of sanctifying and quickening us.”

The evidences which he produces to shew that the Fathers had not the remotest thought of transubstantiation, are so numerous, and so connected in their import with the context, that I cannot attempt to select specimens, especially as I hope you will soon possess the book yourself. I need therefore only observe further, that while L'Arroque seems himself to have cordially concurred with the Fathers in their views of the Eucharist; and while, in the sequel of his work, he faithfully and circumstantially relates the rise of the new doctrine, and gives Bertram all his just credit; he

does not seem to have sufficiently adverted to the fact, that Bertram did not maintain what has since become the popular doctrine of Protestants; but that he embodied, in a compendious form, that primitive temperament of truth, from which too many Protestants have as much deviated on one side, as the followers of Paschasius have done on the other. L'Arroque appears, strangely enough, to suppose that Protestants, generally, think as he himself thinks; whereas, it seems, he might have found it a fact, that even the early opposers of Paschasius were not, in every instance, of the same judgment with Bertram. One writer, in particular, Johannes Scotus Erigena, is represented as having taught "*quod sacramentum Altaris, non verum Corpus et verus Sanguis sit Domini, sed tantum memoria veri Corporis et Sanguinis ejus;*"¹ and I should think that the celebrated Berengarius, who lived in the next century, agreed, not with Bertram, but with Johannes Scotus Erigena; inasmuch as he owned himself a disciple of the latter, but never once mentioned Bertram: a silence no otherwise to be accounted for, considering Bertram's notoriety, than by supposing that Berengarius did not concur in the doctrine which Bertram had contended for. The probability is, that while Bertram resisted an aggressive error in the very spirit which, in later times, has distinguished the

¹ That the Sacrament of the Altar is not the very Body and very Blood of the Lord, but only a remembrance of his very Body and Blood.*

* A quotation in the Introduction to the English edition of Bertram, p. 58.

Church of England,—I mean that of consulting, next to the Holy Scriptures, the clear and decided current of Christian antiquity,—J. Scotus Erigena, and Berengarius,¹ preferred, on the same principle by which, since that time, all sectaries have been actuated, to rest exclusively on Holy Scripture, interpreted by the light of their own minds.

I am thus brought to the point, on account of which I meant to return to Bertram ; I mean the providential link which his book appears to form in the history of our English Church. Such a testimony against a doctrinal excess, which formed one of the main topics of dispute, delivered at so critical a juncture, by so respectable an authority, could not have been regarded with indifference by the first Protestants on the continent, whatever might be their own specific opinions. But, in England, Bertram was not merely valued as an ally, he was looked up to by the wise and excellent Ridley as his master ; not, however, as teaching him any very long-lost truth, but as opening to his mind an undelusive vista, through which the uniform agreement of the Church, for eight hundred years, appeared to him in the most direct opposition to the modern dogma of transubstantiation. The light which Ridley thus received, he speedily communicated to Cranmer ; and the doctrine of Bertram

¹ The case of Berengarius has been recorded by all writers of Ecclesiastical History. The ardour with which he promulgated his doctrine subjected him to the censure of the ruling powers ; and, after having infused a leaven which spread through thousands, he is said himself to have recanted. L'Arroque seems to consider the persons now called Vaudois, as having derived their origin from the secession caused by the zeal of Berengarius.

was, accordingly, embodied in the first reformed Communion service of 1548. But stability not being an ingredient in Cranmer's mental character, which was also defective, it should seem, in that taste and elevation of spirit which qualified Ridley for appreciating the Catholic tradition which Bertram presented to his view, the poor Archbishop soon swerved from his teacher, and embraced the frigid notions of certain continental divines ; under whose guidance the Communion service was re-modified, as far as was deemed expedient, in conformity to Cranmer's new views. No doubt this change was permitted for wise purposes ; but I rejoice to think that, at length, a time came for a far wiser and happier revision.

That Ridley deeply lamented the new notions and measures of Cranmer, his words, in a letter to one of his former chaplains (which I have quoted in my tract on the Eucharist), give ground to conclude, because they can apply to nothing else. " You have," he says, " known me long indeed ; in the which time it hath chanced me, as you say, to mislike some things. It is true, I grant ; for sudden changes, without substantial and necessary cause, and the heady setting forth of extremities, I did never love."

In fact, Ridley must have been affected, as he states, by the altered Communion service ; because we know from himself, that his adherence to Bertram remained unshaken to the last. His own words, with which he concludes one of his defences at Oxford, are the best evidence of his cordial perseverance in the Catholic principles

which he had so deliberately adopted. After having appealed to more than twelve ancient writers, he thus proceeds:—"Here, right worshipful Mr. Prolocutor, and ye, the rest of the Commissioners, it may please you to understand, that I do not lean to those things only which I have written in my former answers and confirmations; but that I have, also, for the proof of that I have spoken, whatsoever Bertram (a man learned, of sound and upright judgment, and ever counted a Catholic for these seven hundred years, until this our age) hath written. This treatise, whosoever shall read and weigh, considering the time of the writer, his learning, godliness of life, the allegation of the ancient Fathers, and his manifold and most grounded arguments, I cannot doubtless but much marvel, if he have any fear of God at all, how he can, with good conscience, speak against him in this matter of the Sacrament. This Bertram was the first that pulled me by the ear, and that first brought me from the common error of the Romish Church, and caused me to search more diligently and exactly, both the Scriptures, and writings of the old ecclesiastical Fathers, concerning this matter. And this I protest, before the face of God, who knoweth I lie not in the things I now speak."

On another occasion, in the same disputation, we find, if possible, a still more express avowal of Ridley's perfect concurrence with Bertram, in the very notion in which Cranmer had appeared to desert him. "Finally," says Ridley, "with Bertram, I confess, that Christ's body is in the sacra-

ment in this respect, namely, as he writeth, because there is in it the spirit of Christ ; that is, the power of his word, which not only feedeth the soul, but also cleanseth it." Had, however, these declarations of Ridley remained to us only as historical records, their weight, at this day, would be little more than that of respectable individual authority. But, though the venerable bishop had lost his influence with his friends, before he fell into the hands of his enemies ; and though his care to preserve Catholicity in the Church of England was, apparently, made fruitless ; the temporary depression of the English reformation, under Mary, not only stopped the possible advance to yet further deviations, but left time for the revival of Ridley's principles, in a certain degree, from the very accession of Elizabeth, and thenceforth in an increasing number of susceptible minds, until at length, after another season of depression from sectarian ascendancy, the spirit of Ridley's doctrine was wonderfully infused into that very form from which Cranmer had sought to exclude it ; and which, considering the yet unsettled state of the public mind (just after the Restoration), the revisers thought it safer to reanimate than to remodify.

Of this judicious management our present Communion service is the inestimable result. When I compare it with the original form, I could wish a greater nearness (though I do not dispute that some questionable matters were prudently omitted) ; but, on a comparison with the service as it stood before the revision, I regard

our present service with sincere pleasure ; and no little wonder at the chain of preparatory events which led to that important result. Had the first Prayer-book of Edward, short-lived as it was, not existed, there would have been no impressive example of a more excellent way ; but yet, a recurrence to that long antiquated form, at once, and in the first instance, might have been less likely to be thought of, and more difficult in practice. Happily, however, it had been already recurred to, in preparing the Prayer-book for Scotland, in 1637 ; and, though the measure failed in its primary purpose, it afforded a most convenient model for the revisers, in 1661, as far as they could follow it with safety. To have done so avowedly, or even observedly, might have raised an outcry, and defeated their whole design ; the Scottish Prayer-book being regarded as the immediate source of the civil war. Except in one remarkable instance, which I will notice, they, therefore, adopted merely the rubrics which the Scottish Prayer-book afforded them. I cannot doubt that, had they felt themselves at liberty, they would have gone further, and that the Scottish Communion service would have been followed throughout ; but, as it is, it will be seen, on a comparison of the former service, as it was before the revision, with the service now in use, that, by means of the rubrics, a new character was given to the celebration of the Eucharist, which substantially reimbued it with the spirit of Bertram, and restored it to the ground on which it had at first been placed.

The instance in which the revisers did more than merely introduce rubrics, was probably chosen, not only as most urgently requiring a change, but also as being least likely to awaken captious observation. In other instances, Cranmer had been content to effect his purpose by omissions (except in his new form of delivering the elements); but in the place now referred to, namely, in the exhortation giving notice of the Sacrament, he had so palpably displaced the doctrine of Bertram and Ridley, and substituted, in its stead, his own new view of the Eucharist, as to create a necessity for making this formula correspond with the revised service, by altering it after the original in the first Prayer-book of Edward.

In that formulary, the exhortation invited communicants in the following terms: “Wherefore our duty is to come to these holy mysteries with most hearty thanks to be given to Almighty God for his infinite mercy and benefits given and bestowed upon us, his unworthy servants, for whom he hath not only given his body to death, but also does vouchsafe in a sacrament and mystery to give us his said body and blood to feed upon spiritually.”

I need not point out to you how expressly the doctrine of Bertram is recognised in this last sentence. Where, therefore, that doctrine was to be expunged, the corresponding sentence in the notification of the Sacrament was thus modified: “Our duty is to render to Almighty God, our heavenly Father, most hearty thanks, for that he hath given his Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sus-

tenance, as it is declared unto us, as well by God's word, as by the holy sacraments of his body and blood."

I think you see at once the amount of this alteration. The spiritual blessing is, in these latter words, as solicitously separated from the outward and visible signs, as it had been, in the former words, expressly combined with them; and, to leave no possible room for supposing the Eucharist a divinely appointed medium of "grace and heavenly benediction," it is distinctly represented as a mere declaratory symbol. If it could be doubted on what principle the Communion service was reconstructed by Cranmer, the single sentence now referred to would decide the question.

But observe, I pray you, how emphatically the revisers have restored what Cranmer had rejected; yet with as much retention as possible of the former language. "Wherefore it is our duty to render most humble and hearty thanks to Almighty God, our heavenly Father, for that he hath given his Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance *in* that holy Sacrament."

As Cranmer, then, by his version of this single passage, manifested the principle which governed all his circumstantial modifications; so, I conceive, the revisers, by restoring, and even, in some sort, strengthening the significant terms used in the first English Prayer-book, have thrown a light, not to be mistaken, on all the other particulars by which our present Communion service is distinguished from what it was before the revision.

I have dwelt upon the history of the Eucharist in the Church of England, not in compliance with my own predilection, strong as that may be; but because, laying all circumstances together, I impartially consider our Church as the exclusive providential conservatory of ancient Catholic faith and ancient Catholic piety. This deep conviction (for I can use no weaker words) would require a volume to do it justice; but I would hope, that even the sketch which I have given will, in one instance, at least, support its probability. That Bertram should have been raised, as it were, to bear such a testimony at so critical a conjuncture, was very wonderful. That, in the stormy season of the Reformation, when the revulsion from old extremes teemed with so many new extremes, our Ridley should have been led to embrace the temperament of Bertram, and to embody it in the first Liturgy, was even yet more wonderful. And that, when this transcript of primitive doctrine was swept away by a whelming tide of new notions, and seemed to have perished for ever, the life and substance of it should, after the lapse of more than a century, be so strangely revived and established (strangely, I say, considering all the predisposing and facilitating circumstances), is, surely, the most surprising thing of all. The happy result undoubtedly is, that our Church has thus been made, in one most important instance, a faithful exemplar of the purest Christian antiquity; and I trust that, by being such, in a degree and manner peculiar to herself, she will yet, in the good time of Providence, become a rallying point for safe escape from

all religious errors and extravagances, on the one side and on the other.

Having thus given you my general view of the subject you bring before me, I turn to your quotation from Justin Martyr; who, I conceive, may be much more easily acquitted of holding transubstantiation, than of being unaccountably obscure.

That a literal transubstantiation was not in his thoughts, appears from his declaring the εὐχαριστηθεῖσαν τροφήν to be that, ἐξ ἧς αἷμα καὶ σάρκες, κατὰ μεταβολήν, τρέφονται ἡμῶν.¹ This acknowledged identity of the aliment which has been consecrated, with that which, through the natural process of transmutation, becomes the nourishment of our bodies, cannot consist with the notion of the modern Church of Rome, as (no doubt correctly) stated by Bossuet. “La Foi,” says he, “attentive à la parole de Celui, qui fait tout ce qui lui plaît dans le ciel et dans la terre, ne reconnoît plus ici d’autre substance que celle qui est désignée par cette même parole; c’est-à-dire, le propre corps, et le propre sang de Jésus-Christ, auxquels le pain et le vin sont changés; c’est ce qu’on appelle transubstantiation.”²

Had the idea conveyed in these words been present to the mind of Justin, he would naturally

¹ The food which has been blessed . . . by means of which our blood and flesh are strengthened in the course of the changes [of assimilation].—Apol. § 66.

² Faith, giving heed to the word of Him, who doth whatsoever pleaseth him in heaven and in earth, perceives no longer here any other substance than that which is designated by that word; namely, the very body, and the very blood, of Jesus Christ, into which the bread and wine have been changed. This is what is meant by the term transubstantiation.

have chosen some verb expressive of the miraculous transmutation which he was supposing. But, on the contrary, he uses the substantive verb εἶναι (to be); as if simply to state the purpose to which the consecrated aliment served, without intimating any other change, except that of being made spiritually efficacious, δι' εὐχῆς λόγου.¹ At the same time, I must acknowledge, that it is easier to ascertain what Justin Martyr did not mean, than what he precisely did mean; and I think, with you, that it was a strange method of informing heathens respecting Christianity. This consideration might almost lead to a doubt, whether we have the passage exactly as Justin left it. I should think it a possible thing, that ancient manuscripts were tampered with after the fourth Council of Lateran; though, from the mere darkness of the passage, I should rather imagine, that some word, fixing the import of the position, “ἐκείνου τοῦ σαρκοποιηθέντος Ἰησοῦ καὶ σάρκα καὶ αἷμα ἐδιδάχθημεν εἶναι,”² had been omitted by some early transcriber.

Should you find in Irenæus expressions appearing to favour transubstantiation, you will, of course, consider that, except in a few preserved passages, you have him only in a very poor Latin translation. But I presume you will meet other passages which prove him not to have held any such tenet. For example, the following passage is quoted by L'Arroque: “We preach, in the Eucharist, the communion and unity of the flesh and

¹ By means of a prayer, in language which was used by him.

² Have we been taught that [the food which has been blessed] is both the body and blood of Jesus, who was made flesh.

spirit; for as the bread, which is of the earth, receiving the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but is the Sacrament composed of two things, the one terrestrial, the other celestial; so, also, our bodies are no more corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection." I need hardly say, that I transcribe this quotation from L'Arroque, simply for the sake of its perfect contrariety to the doctrine of the Church of Rome. Irenæus's notion of the Sacrament conveying a principle of immortality¹ to the body may be right or wrong, (though it was by no means singular, and is quoted with respect, even in the Homily of the Sacrament.) What I rest in, is the explicit declaration, that the bread, after consecration, though no longer common bread, still retains its terrestrial nature, along with its new celestial property; and I think I may add, that the assertion is expressed so distinctly, as to imply a moral impossibility of Irenæus having ever spoken otherwise.

I cannot, however, omit a very remarkable evidence in support of the non-existence of transubstantiation, until it was devised by Paschasius, and established in that otherwise ever-memorable council. The authority I have to produce, is that of the very respectable Cuthbert Tonstal, the last Roman Catholic Bishop of Durham. A tract written by him, in the reign of Edward VI., *De Veritate Corporis et Sanguinis Domini in Eucharistiá*, lies now before me, in which, while I find him maintaining that all Catholic Christians, from

¹ I am not sure, however, that such is his meaning; but the idea was certainly entertained.

the beginning, believed concerning the Eucharist, “quod vere ibi, et realiter, Corpus Christi continetur,”¹ I meet an equally express admission, that the modus of our Saviour’s presence in that Holy Sacrament was unfixed, until the fourth Council of Lateran; insomuch, that Luther’s doctrine (“modus quem Lutherus secutus videtur”) would, before that period, have been as orthodox as any other. And, accordingly, while he refers (I presume) to that very passage in Justin Martyr, for proof that “nusquam quisquam Catholicus, ad baptismum admissus, dubitavit de præsentia in Eucharistiæ sacramento,” he adds, “cæterum quo modo panis, qui ante consecrationem erat communis, ineffabili Spiritus sanctificatione transiret in corpus ejus, veterum doctissimi quique inscrutabile existimaverunt.”² That this statement acknowledges Transubstantiation to have been yet unthought of, is plain from the very terms; but it is plainer still, from the supposition which Tonsal makes of two other possible measures, even while insisting that, “quia Ecclesia columna est veritatis, firmum ejus omnino observetur judicium;” which two measures he thus expresses: “An satius fuisset curiosis omnibus imposuisse silentium, ne scrutarentur modum quo id fieret, sicut fecerunt prisci illi qui inscrutabilia quærere non tentabant; an vero potius de

¹ That the body of Christ is verily and indeed contained therein.

² Never did any member of the Catholic church, who had been admitted to baptism, doubt the real presence in the sacrament of the Eucharist. * * * But, as touching the manner in which that, which, before consecration, was common bread, was changed, by the unspeakable sanctification of the Spirit, into his body, all the most learned men of Christian antiquity held it to be no subject of lawful inquiry.

modo quo id fieret curiosum quemque suæ relinquere conjecturæ, sicut liberum fuit ante illud concilium, modo veritatem corporis et sanguinis Domini in Eucharistia esse fateretur, quæ fuit ab initio ipsi ecclesiæ fides."¹ This last assertion, and others like it, are no more than what Tonsal must have said and thought; and what is of far greater weight, positions of a similar kind have been admitted, in a sound sense, even by our wise and temperate Ridley. But whatever we may think of such expressions, as understood by Tonsal, I conceive his admissions are weighty and decisive. The acknowledgment, that there was unrestrained freedom of opinion respecting the mode of our Saviour's presence in the Eucharist, until that same council; and that then, and not before, the definite doctrine of Transubstantiation was authoritatively imposed upon all, is an express avowal of innovation; and, by consequence, a direct and conclusive testimony to the simpler and purer belief of the ancient Church.

I must now leave you to ascertain for yourself what precisely that belief was; my limited reading admitting only of an endeavour to shew you what it was not. I cannot, however, conclude, without

¹ * * * because the Church is the Pillar of Truth, heed ought, by all means, to be given to her decided judgment. * * * Whether it had been better to have enjoined silence on all curious people, so that they should not examine the mode in which the change took place, after the example of those primitive men, who did not attempt to investigate matters which were above their examination; or, to leave every curious man to his own conjecture, as to the mode, according to the freedom which had existed before that council, so that he did but acknowledge the verity of the body and blood of the Lord in the Eucharist, which was the belief of the Church from the beginning.

giving two extracts, one from Dr. Thomas Jackson, the other from Bishop Overall, both divines of the first eminence in their day ; that you may have it in your power to judge whether the ancient Fathers say any thing substantially different from what those judicious and sober-minded men considered to be the doctrine of the Church of England.

“ When we say,” says Dr. Jackson, “ that Christ is really present in the Sacrament, our meaning is, that, as God, he is present, in an extraordinary manner ; after such a manner as he was present (before his incarnation) in his sanctuary, the ark of his covenant ; and, by the power of his Godhead, thus extraordinarily present, he diffuseth the virtue or operation of his human nature for the vivification of those who” (he means, rightly) “ receive the sacramental pledges.”

Dr. Overall was Regius Professor in the University of Cambridge ; and having, in some public disputation, so expressed himself respecting the Eucharist, as to excite jealousy in the minds of his puritanical hearers, he thought it necessary explicitly to declare what he believed on the subject. His words are as follow :—

“ In Sacramento Eucharistiæ, sive Cœna Dominica, Christi Corpus et Sanguinem, totumque adeo Christum vere quidem adesse ; et vere a nobis participari, vereque conjungi cum signis sacramentalibus, ut cum signis non solum significativis, sed etiam exhibitivis ; ita ut in recte dato et accepto pane, detur et accipiatur Corpus Christi ;

dato et accepto vino, detur et accipiatur Sanguis Christi, totusque adeo Christus in sacramenti communione communicetur.”¹ Probably, had Overall lived before the tenth century, he would have thought he had sufficiently stated his belief in the above expressions ; but, placed as he was in other circumstances, it was expedient for him, not only to maintain ancient truth, but to protest against erroneous innovation ; he therefore added these words :—

“Sed non modo corporali, crasso, terreno ; per transubstantiationem, vel consubstantiationem, similiave rationis humanæ commenta, sed modo mystico, cœlesti, ac spirituali, ut recte in articulis nostris præscriptum est.”²

I have not adverted to your candid admission (which I need not tell you gave me very real pleasure), that Justin Martyr’s expressions, and those of other Fathers, appear to support my view of the sacrament. Such, certainly, has been my own deep persuasion ; and you have now some of the grounds on which that persuasion has rested. In the little treatise, however, I did not think it pru-

¹ * * * that in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, or the Lord’s Supper, the body and blood of Christ, and therefore the whole of Christ, is verily and indeed present, and is verily partaken by us, and verily combined with the sacramental signs, as being not only significative, but exhibitory ; so that in the bread duly given and received, the body of Christ is given and received ; in the wine given and received, the blood of Christ is given and received ; and thus there is a communion of the whole of Christ, in the communion of the sacrament.

² Yet not in any bodily, gross, earthly manner, as by transubstantiation, or consubstantiation, or any like devices of human reason ; but in a mystical, heavenly, and spiritual manner, as is rightly laid down in our articles.

dent to introduce a subject, of which I could not have made use without greatly enlarging my plan. I therefore deemed it best not to look beyond the Church of England; reserving the other subject for a preliminary discourse, in the event of actual publication. After all, I assure you, I could not have written with satisfaction to myself, if I had not been convinced, that, on the point in question, the Church of England, and the Fathers, were faithful followers, and true expositors, of our blessed Saviour, and of St. Paul.

Ever yours,

ALEX. KNOX.

July 19, 1826.

TREATISE ON THE USE AND IMPORT OF THE EUCCHARISTIC SYMBOLS.

As the great body of Christians, who, three centuries ago, rejected the Romish yoke, differ generally from the Church of Rome on the subject of the Eucharist; so do they also, among themselves, maintain certain specific differences respecting the design and import of that sacred institution.

The principal point of controversy appears to turn upon this question:—*Is the blessing, to be expected in the Eucharist by qualified receivers, a mere communication of the ordinary grace of God, obtained in the same purely inward and mental manner as in other exercises of devotion?—or, Is there, in this holy sacrament, a peculiar effluence of supernatural grace, mysteriously united with the consecrated symbols, so as to make them the vehicles of heavenly benediction to the capable communicant?*

The maintainers of the former of these views have, doubtless, explained themselves with much verbal difference; and, in the earlier times of the Reformation, with not a little obscurity. But their great point of agreement seems to have consisted in their separating the sacramental blessing, in whatever manner they defined it, from the sacramental symbols; and regarding the spiritual part of the transaction, as exclusively within the mind of the receiver.

Of this way of thinking were, most probably, all the Helvetic Reformers. Calvin, though accustomed to use strong language respecting the Eucharist, must still be understood to have connected the grace of the Eucharist with the commemorating act, but in no manner with the symbols. And Bucer, who was invited into England, in the reign of Edward VI., to give counsel in further changes which were meditated in the lately established English Liturgy, was clearly and zealously of the same opinion.

Our justly celebrated Ridley, in his rejection of Roman Catholic excesses, had been led to take a different view, and, no less clearly, to connect the grace communicated in the Eucharist with the received symbols. His influence, there is reason to believe, had predominated in the first reformation of the Liturgy ; inasmuch as, in every part of the Communion Service, the idea of a blessing, strictly through the consecrated elements, is impressively conveyed. But, by the advice of Bucer, the first service, after a year or two, was remodified ; and the idea of combination of grace with the symbols, had not, in the former service, been more carefully intimated, than it appeared afterward to be studiously excluded.¹

¹ And yet, after all, the exclusion was not complete. Probably, Cranmer did not wish to carry his changes as far as would have been necessary for this purpose. The original doctrine, therefore, still remained, by the most obvious implication, in the commencing sentences of the exhortation, "Dearly beloved in the Lord," &c. in which Ridley's view of the Holy Eucharist appears to be conveyed, if not as expressly, yet as substantially, and with as much simple sublimity, as it could be in human language.

In this alteration, Ridley obviously could not concur, though conscientious prudence restrained him from actual opposition. Most probably, it was with particular reference to this very matter, that he acknowledged, in a letter to a former chaplain, written during his confinement, that, in the recent times, it "had chanced him to mislike some things; for," he adds, "sudden changes, without substantial and necessary cause, and the heady setting forth of extremities, I did never love."¹ Besides, in the very last period of his life, he declared his own belief, that, in the Eucharist, "what was before common bread, is now made a lively representation of Christ's body; and that it is not only a figure, but effectuously representeth his body: such a sacramental mutation," he says, "I grant to be in the bread and wine; which, truly, is no small change; but such a change as no mortal man can make, but only the omnipotency of Christ's word."²

But it is remarkable, that notwithstanding the change in the Communion Service, those passages of the lately formed Articles, in which the old doctrine was substantially conveyed, still remained unaltered. Undoubtedly it would have been expunged in every instance, had divine Providence allowed time for the accomplishment of all that was then meditated. But whatever were the intentions of Cranmer, they were speedily made abortive, by the death of Edward VI.

It must be observed, however, that the changes

¹ Ridley's *Life of Ridley*, p. 578.

² Wordsworth, vol. iii. p. 237. Ridley's *Life of Ridley*, p. 20.

in the Communion Service, made at the suggestion of Bucer, implied the omission of the former doctrine rather than the substitution of an opposite doctrine in its stead. The only direct intimation of Bucer's theory, was given in the altered form of delivering the symbols. In the first English Service, the two commencing sentences of the present forms stood alone ; in the altered service, the two present latter sentences stood alone, as substitutes for the two former. On the accession of Elizabeth, however, the two original sentences were restored ; but prefixed to the two latter, as we still have them. Thus, in a certain degree, the doctrine of Ridley was again recognised, inasmuch as it is clearly intimated in the replaced words, which must have been restored for the very sake of that intimation ; while the subjoined words, which conveyed an opposite sense as substitutes, cannot be thus understood, when merely an addition. They express a truth, but not the whole truth. When they stood as substitutes, they appeared to convey the *only* true notion, and especially to exclude that idea which the former words had suggested.

This reinstatement of the significant words, which, for so many ages, had been used in the Christian Church, had (together with the unaltered Articles already adverted to) a stronger influence on the minds of the succeeding Clergy, in favour of Ridley's doctrine, than its studied omission, in the rest of the Communion Service, could have against it. Various evidences of this fact might be adduced ; but the most conclusive proof is afforded

by the Prayer-book for the Scottish Church, in the year 1637. In the Communion Service of that formulary, the first Prayer-book of King Edward was substantially followed, and Ridley's doctrine, in consequence, avowedly maintained. Had that measure succeeded in Scotland, there can be little doubt, that a like recurrence to the earlier principles of our Reformation would have taken place in England. But every such project was frustrated, and the entire design defeated, by the civil war which so speedily ensued. The Scottish Service-book, however, had its eventual use, in affording material guidance to the revisers of the English Prayer-book, after the Restoration. The object, then, evidently was, to reinfuse the spirit of Ridley's doctrine into the Communion Service. But political reasons required this purpose to be effected, not avowedly, but by significant intimations; that is, by Rubrics, enjoining certain things to be done which had not been directed in the unrevised form; but which, being now deliberately introduced after so long an omission, had a far greater force than if they had remained from the beginning; while, on an attentive, and still more on a comparative, examination of them, their meaning will appear irresistible. Thus, without adding one word to the service itself, (a restraint which we may believe they would gladly not have felt, as their following the Scottish Prayer-book so much, bespeaks a wish to have followed it still more completely,) the revisers effected a kind of revolution in our Communion Service, which, quiet as it was,

has probably been as deep in its operation on the feelings of the devout, as it will be found decisive in its import to the intelligent mind.

I have stated these particulars, as tending to illustrate the ground on which I ascribe the doctrine of Ridley to the existing Church of England; but, to evince this fact more fully, it, will be necessary to adduce the instances already alluded to, in which the original view of the Reformed Church of England had remained unaltered.

The 25th Article of the Church treats expressly “of the Sacraments;” and it declares them “to be not only badges, or tokens, of Christian men’s profession, but rather certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and of God’s good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but strengthen and confirm, our faith in him.”

I conceive Ridley’s doctrine of the Eucharist could scarcely be expressed with greater simplicity or strength, than in these words. The Sacraments are said to be *effectual signs of grace*, for this reason, *because, by them, God works invisibly in us*; that is, the visible signs are the means, or instruments, by which God performs his invisible work on our mind and hearts. There is an import in the expression, *works invisibly*, which deserves attention. It implies that the divine operation, through the visible signs, is not the less real or direct, because imperceptible to our bodily senses. An explanation of this mysterious transaction is, of course, not attempted; but the instrumentality

of the visible signs is, evidently, made the very essence of a Sacrament.

In the 28th Article, which treats specially of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, are the following words: "The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner." This position was, no doubt, made in contradiction to the gross doctrine of a literal transubstantiation; but it rejects that error, not by a mere negation, but by also laying down the strict truth of the case. "The body of Christ" is not said, in a general way, to be *received*, but to be *given, taken, and eaten*; as if there was a solicitude, in correcting the abuses of the Sacrament, explicitly to maintain the union between the heavenly and spiritual blessing, and the outward and visible sign. *This, is given* by the minister and *taken* by the communicant. To use these precise expressions, therefore, respecting "the body of Christ," is, by clearest implication, to combine that "heavenly and spiritual blessing" with the *given and taken* symbol.

The same notion will be found equally recognised, in the 29th Article: "Of the wicked, which eat not the body of Christ, in the use of the Lord's Supper."

"The wicked," says the Article, "and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as St. Augustin saith,) the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, yet in nowise are they partakers of Christ; but rather to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign, and sacrament, of so great a thing."

It need not be shewn how superfluous and inapposite the terms of this negation would be, if no conjunction of the spiritual blessing with the visible signs had been contemplated. It is the idea of such a conjunction only, which could make it necessary to assert, that, although the wicked pressed the Sacrament visibly with their teeth, they, nevertheless, did not partake of the invisible blessing. But, in truth, to apply the term *Sacrament*, to the visible sign, to give that denomination to the consecrated symbols, rather than to the act of commemorating or communicating, would intimate, if even nothing more were said, that those visible symbols were regarded, as the divinely constituted means, or vehicles, of the invisible blessing.

When such definite expressions of doctrine as have now been adduced, had been, through divine Providence, preserved unaltered, it is not extraordinary, that the views of Ridley should have still remained prevalent, notwithstanding the omission of them in the Communion Service. It seems, in fact, that they gained strength through time ; as, in the reign of James I., it was thought expedient to introduce them into the catechetical instruction of children.

In the addition then made to the Catechism, a Sacrament is defined, as an “ outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us ; ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.” The outward and visible sign, in the Lord’s Supper, is stated to be “ bread and wine,

which the Lord has commanded to be received ;” and the inward part, or thing signified, is “the body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful,” in that Sacrament.

Here it is, in the first place, distinctly taught, that the outward and visible sign in a Sacrament, is the means whereby we receive the inward and spiritual grace ; and we are to observe, that the term *inward* does not, in this instance, mark a quality of that grace, as operating in us (however, in that sense also, justly applicable), but as existing, in some mysterious manner, in the Sacrament itself ; for it is of *this*, that the spiritual grace is declared to be the “*inward part* ;” evidently implying, that, through the divine power, the visible signs become, for our spiritual benefit, supernaturally endued with invisible virtue.

This virtue, in the Lord’s Supper, is declared to be, “the body and blood of Christ ;” that is, in the sublime and heavenly sense, in which our Saviour himself speaks of his flesh and blood, in the 6th chapter of St. John. These are said to be, “verily and indeed taken and received,” by all faithful communicants. The strength of this language has been universally felt ; and, to some, it has appeared ambiguous. But it should always be kept in view, that the mysterious matter thus spoken of, had already been described, as an “inward and *spiritual* grace ;” and was, therefore, to be understood no otherwise than in that spiritual manner of which our Lord himself has given the example. But it was thought right, expressly to

notify, that this divine communication, by being *spiritual*, was not on that account the less *real*; that, in fact, it was a *substantive communication* from the adorable person of our Redeemer, quickening us with his divine vitality, strengthening us with his strength, and enriching us, in proportion to our faithfulness, with all the graces which were in him.

And as such solicitude was felt to assert the divine nature and potency of this heavenly grace, so was there no less attention to omit nothing which might impress its combination with the symbols. "The body and blood of Christ," therefore, are declared to be "*taken*," as well as "received by the faithful." The latter word would have been sufficient, had it been intended to leave at large the manner of communication. The former word consequently was used for the very purpose of suggesting that manner; for (as was remarked on the 28th Article) the word "*taken*," clearly refers to the "given" symbol, and thus intimates the mysterious connexion between the visible signs and the invisible blessing.

I have adduced and remarked upon the above passages, in the authoritative forms of our Church, not only from due respect to their weight, but because I thought I could not better elucidate the matter in discussion, than by endeavouring to explain the views of the Church of England concerning it. I add nothing to what I have already remarked, respecting the modifications of the Communion Service, effected by the revisers, in 1661; because their insertions could neither be appre-

ciated, nor clearly understood, except by comparing the service, as it had stood before, with the revised form.

I have also dwelt more particularly on the evidences of what our church maintains on this subject, because, during the last hundred years, another view has been taken, even by some who supported the general idea of grace concurring in the sacramental act, against Bishop Hoadley and his followers; and who were accounted, in other respects, champions of orthodoxy.

The most conspicuous of this class, was the celebrated Dr. Waterland; who, in his work on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,¹ while he zealously argues for grace from heaven, as concomitant to the act, seems little less anxious to repel the notion of any mysterious connexion of that grace with the symbols. It is remarkable, that he takes Cranmer as, on this point, the genuine interpreter of the Church of England; and, though Ridley's very different sentiments must have been well known to him, he passes them over in a sort of shuffling manner, as if he did not like to meddle with them. The characteristic coldness of Waterland might very naturally have made him prefer the more general and indefinite notion; but knowingly to keep back the judgment of such a man as Ridley, was not doing complete justice, either to the subject, or to the reader.

A still later writer, of at least equal weight and celebrity (Bishop Horsley), may, however, be

¹ P. 257.

adduced, as strictly agreeing with Ridley. In one of his charges to the clergy of Rochester we find the following passage: "But the frequency of the celebration will be of little use, unless your people are well instructed in the nature and use of this most holy and mysterious ordinance. If they are suffered to consider it as nothing more than a rite of simple commemoration of Christ's death, a mere external form of thanksgiving on the part of the receiver, they will never come to it with due reverence. You will instruct them, therefore, in the true notion of a sacrament; that the sacraments are not only signs of grace, but means of the grace signified, the *matter of the sacrament* being by Christ's appointment, and the operation of the Holy Spirit, *the vehicle of grace* to the believer's soul."

But, however clearly the Church of England and her most celebrated divines may have spoken, it will still be asked, Whether the doctrine itself can be shewn to correspond with the analogy of the divine proceedings, and to be supported by the language of the Holy Scripture?

The question respecting the correspondence of this doctrine with the general analogy of the divine proceedings, must be answered by referring, first, to the most signal exercises of divine power, for man's benefit, in the Old Testament; and, next, to such instances of the divine conduct, in the New Testament, as may be fairly thought to accord, in their general nature, with the case in question.

With respect to the Old Testament, I believe it may be asserted, that wherever a divine benefit, or blessing, whether to individuals, or to the whole people, was of such a nature, as suitably to admit the intervention of a sensible instrument, or medium,—something bearing that character, in itself, perhaps of the humblest nature, was almost uniformly employed. To particularise the various instances, would be to transcribe a large portion of the sacred history. It may be sufficient to adduce some of the most striking examples.

It is, in the first place, worthy of remark, that, in this precise way, even innocent man in Paradise was to enjoy the blessing of immortality. Instead of possessing this privilege as an inherent property, he was to derive its continuance from eating the fruit of a particular tree; and, accordingly, when, through disobedience, the threatened mortality was incurred, the sentence was executed by an exclusion from that tree. It must not be omitted, that from the earliest ages of the Christian Church, it has been usual to regard the tree of life, in Eden, as a significant type of the Eucharist; and, in admitting this correspondence, the idea of a similar mysterious efficacy, in the eucharistical symbols, for sustaining spiritual life and immortality, was naturally, if not necessarily, implied.

At a subsequent period, when, in the great progressive scheme of divine beneficence, Moses was commissioned to work miracles, he was not directed to perform them merely by a word. The shepherd's rod, which, at the moment of the divine call, he had in his hand, was, from thence, to be, not

only the ensign, but the instrument, of the power with which he was endued. "Thou shalt take this rod," said Jehovah, "in thy hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs." We accordingly find it afterward denominated, *the rod of God*; and the numerous instances in which it was used, are so many exemplifications of Omnipotence acting through a material medium. There was a profound fitness in this mode of proceeding, else it would not have been adopted. It obviously gave a palpability to the divine interposition, which accommodated it, with peculiar aptitude, to the complex nature of man; while the simplicity of the means evinced the unseen agency by which the effect was accomplished.

We may also observe, that not only where miraculous acts were to be performed, but even where settled purposes were to be notified, and habitual impressions produced, sensible expedients were equally employed. Thus, to give sustenance, through the bodily senses, to the faith and devotion of the heart, the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, accompanied the children of Israel through the wilderness; and thus, when that miraculous token of the divine presence ceased to appear, the ark of the covenant, to which it had been used to attach itself, and which was thereby sealed as the perpetual symbol of God's special residence, became the point of inexpressible attraction to every true Israelite, as the place where God was infallibly to be found, and from whence mercy and goodness were sure to flow forth upon every faithful worshipper.

The depth of this feeling might be illustrated by numerous examples. The care which God was pleased to take for its confirmation and continuance, at the consecration of Solomon's temple, by the reappearance of the same divine cloud attaching itself to the same ark, in proof that the same presence would reside in the new mansion, unspeakably evinced the value of such a support to faith, and such an excitement to devotion. Its actual influence on minds the most capable of appreciating it, is manifested in the case of Daniel; who so venerated and loved even the desolated spot which had been thus distinguished, that, in defiance of the king of Babylon's edict, he persevered in praying, as he had been wont, three times a-day, "his windows being open, in his chamber, toward Jerusalem."

It will hardly be said, that the eyes of pious Israelites were directed to the ark, as the pledge and symbol of providential, rather than of strictly spiritual, blessings. An expectation of these latter is continually expressed in the devotional language of the Old Testament; and it is every where evident, that, in the inmost concerns of the heart, access to God was facilitated, reliance on God strengthened, and fixedness and concentration of mind secured and heightened, by the settled assurance of his specially present Majesty.

But it particularly pertains to the main question to remark, that amongst extraordinary effects produced in the Old Testament times, through material instruments, those of a strictly mental and spiritual nature are not wholly wanting. One

instance, at least, of this kind, is found in the impression on the mind of Elisha, through the touch of Elijah's mantle. Elijah had been directed to appoint Elisha his successor in the prophetic office. It may therefore be concluded, that the general dispositions of the latter fitted him for such a distinction; but he himself seems, at the moment, to have had no apprehension of what awaited him, as he was busily occupied in agricultural labour; but as soon as Elijah cast his mantle upon him, he is drawn, as if by irresistible attraction; and only wishes to have time for bidding his father's house farewell. The prophet, probably, had been led to throw his mantle by a special impulse, and scarcely foresaw the fulness of the result; for he answers, as if in some surprise, "Go back again, for what have I done unto thee?" But it is remarkable, that that very mantle becomes, again, the pledge and symbol of divine blessing to Elisha. He had asked that a double portion of his master's spirit should rest upon him; and the fall of Elijah's mantle, while the prophet himself was carried up to heaven, appears to have been regarded by Elisha, as notifying the success of his petition. In addition to what he himself had felt, he had seen Elijah divide the waters of Jordan, by smiting them with that very mantle; and as if to satisfy himself, that, in possessing the visible pledge, he possessed also the mysterious power, we see him smiting the same waters with the same mantle, with the solemn and successful appeal,—“Where is the Lord God of Elijah?”

Were the above instances to be contemplated by themselves, it might perhaps be thought, that such accommodation to man's animal nature belonged rather to the Jewish dispensation than to the spirituality of the Gospel. But this notion would be disproved at once by the slightest attention to the actual conduct, both of our Lord, and his Apostles.

It was right, and perhaps necessary, that when the Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among men, he should manifest his divine prerogative, of simply commanding nature, and being instantly obeyed. He accordingly, on some occasions, merely spoke, and the effect immediately followed. Thus, he healed the centurion's servant, and the nobleman's son, who was sick at Capernaum. Thus, he stilled the tempest; and thus, also, he raised Lazarus from the tomb. But, ordinarily, he was pleased to act otherwise. He made use of some visible sign; and often transmitted the divine virtue, which dwelt in him, through a material medium. He laid his hands on those who applied; or he permitted them to touch "the hem of his garment, and as many as touched him were made perfectly whole." Once, he touched the tongue of a dumb man with his spittle. At another time, he made clay by spitting on the ground, and put it on the eyes of a blind man, whom he sent (for the obvious purpose of notoriety) to wash it off in the pool of Siloam.

Nor was it only where corporeal blessings were conveyed, that our Lord was pleased to use a

visible sign. When children were brought to him, not to be healed, but simply to receive his divine benediction, we read that he laid his hands upon them. And in that most signal instance, when, after his resurrection, he solemnly established his Apostles in their exalted office, we are told, that "he breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

With reference to the particular subject under consideration, this last instance appears worthy of peculiar attention. The period of types and shadows was now clearly over, and the dispensation of "Grace and Truth" had substantially begun. We may humbly conclude, therefore, that our Lord would do nothing at this time, which was not strictly congenial with all that was to follow. Yet at this moment of immutable precedent, he employs the same method of impressive accommodation to man's animal nature. In an instance the most important and vital, he communicates inward and spiritual grace, through an outward sign and a corporeal medium. His breath, as man, is made the vehicle of that Spirit, which, even as man, he had possessed without measure. It was the last and best blessing which his Apostles were to receive from his bodily presence; and may be justly regarded as their first strict and proper animation with the inward and spiritual life; the first fulfilment of that promise, so lately made to them respecting the divine Paraclete, "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Here, therefore (it would seem), no less really than on the day of

Pentecost, the words of his forerunner were verified, "He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost." On that day they received new powers; the fire which our Lord came to send upon the earth, was then *visibly* kindled; but it was at that former time, when our Lord "breathed upon them," and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," that they really became *new creatures*; for how else shall we account for those clearer apprehensions of the new dispensation, which their choice of a successor to Judas, and their deep and unremitting intensity in prayer, prove them to have possessed, previously to their last signal endowment "with power from on high?"

I have enlarged on that remarkable act of our Redeemer, in his final intercourse with his Apostles on earth, not merely because it may be thought in the highest degree pertinent to my present subject, but because its powerful influence, as manifested in so immediate a change of character, has, as far as I know, been hitherto not sufficiently adverted to.

That the Apostles, from this and other divine evidences, were, in their own minds, impressed with the suitable transmission of inward and spiritual blessings, through outward and visible signs, appears from their own subsequent practice. As their divine Master, in breathing on them, had made them partakers of that Spirit which was in him; so, when it became their part, as his ministers, to communicate, in measure, the same heavenly gift to others, they conferred this blessing by the

imposition of their hands ; and it is expressly testified, that “through the laying on of the Apostles’ hands, the Holy Ghost was given.”

It is remarkable, that this practice of the Apostle is stated, without any explanatory observation ; obviously, because such a proceeding, however wonderful in itself, was in such complete accordance with all of a like nature which had been done formerly, that there was no more room, before-hand, for questioning its fitness, than there was possibility, afterward, of disputing its efficacy.

Enough being now said, in the way of preliminary remark ; it may be proper, in considering the subject itself, to begin with this natural question, —In what light were our Lord’s Apostles most likely to contemplate the institution of the holy Eucharist, under all the impressions which we must suppose to have possessed their minds ?

Our Lord’s discourse, in the 6th chapter of St. John, could not but be present to their thoughts ; for the Holy Spirit was to bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever had been said unto them. Those deeply significant words, “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father ; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me :” these words, I say, could not but associate themselves, in the minds of the Apostles, with the strictly corresponding language used at the institution of the eucharistic Sacrament ; and it would be not merely natural, but

inevitable for them to explain our Lord's words on the one occasion, by what he had so emphatically spoken on the other.

In that memorable discourse, he had clearly intimated that his death was to make provision for that divine nutriment, which he was to furnish from himself. "The bread from heaven," said he, "is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." When, therefore, just before his entrance on the great concluding scene, he took bread, and having blessed and broken it, gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you," it was impossible not to connect these words, and this act, with the corresponding expressions uttered at Capernaum. When they saw that last Paschal supper (in itself a type of the Redeemer) formed into a new ordinance, in which the acts of eating and drinking were to have an import, and the aliments fed upon to bear a denomination, identical with the terms of that former announcement; what could be their conclusion, but that not only the ordinance generally, but the specific acts and aliments so distinguished, were to be instrumentally conducive to that divine benefit with which they were thus intimately conjoined?

I must venture to add, that in proportion to their high apprehensions of the blessings to be conferred, the more disposed would they be to recognise the entire fitness of such means of conveyance. It has been seen that their minds were habituated to the transmission of such influences as were strictly supernatural and heavenly, through

sensible and material vehicles. But what influence could they have conceived, more supernatural, or more heavenly, than such a communication of himself, as their divine Master had warranted them to expect? The terms in which that assurance had been given, were so definite, so distinctive, and so reiterated, as to require an adequate construction, and to convey a substantive idea; and our Lord, after using them, was pleased, emphatically, to attest their high and holy import, by declaring, "The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

The promise, therefore, of our Lord's flesh and blood to be to them meat indeed, and drink indeed, to be the spiritual and eternal life of their souls, by virtue of which he should dwell in them and they in him, and they should live by him as he lived by the Father,—this promise, I say, could not, consistently with the terms in which it is expressed, be understood to mean any thing less than an inconceivable, but most real, emanation from his divine person, in which there would be the same exercise of his divine power, for the animation and sustenance of the soul, as when divine virtue had gone out of him for the healing of the body. I conceive they could have given no other interpretation than this to our Lord's prospective assurances. In the appointment, therefore, of visible symbols to be instrumentally effective in conveying the promised blessing, they would see nothing but that which, according to all their experience, was suitable and proportionate. They would, moreover, perceive, that a twofold communication, the flesh

and blood of the Redeemer, was provided for by a twofold medium; the lowliness of which evinced only the more, the power of the invisible agent, while, in such an operation, it would not appear unfitting, that bread, the prime nourishment of human life, and wine, the prime cherisher of human weakness, should be the material instruments of this heavenly purpose.

I do not mean to say, that such thoughts were likely to have occurred, at that hour, when the sacrament of the Eucharist was first instituted. At no time were the Apostles less competent to have discovered the weighty import of our Lord's expressions. Probably, in the depth of that sorrow which had filled their hearts, they did not recollect the particular discourse by which alone his language could have been fully explained. But, afterwards, when the promise was fulfilled, that all things which they had heard should be brought to their remembrance, the connexion between the discourse at Capernaum and the eucharistic institution, would impress itself on them, in all its clearness and importance; and may it not be presumed, that the more they considered the subject, the greater reason would they perceive for acknowledging the divine goodness and wisdom, not only in the transcendent nature of the blessing thus entailed upon the church, but also in the choice of such an appropriate provision for its stated and perpetual communication?

It would be obvious to them, that if the sacrament of the Eucharist had been ordained merely as a commemorative celebration,—that is, if our

Redeemer had said nothing more than, "Do this in remembrance of me," its institution would have implied rather the injunction of a permanent duty, than the pledge and means of a permanent blessing. In that view, it might have afforded an occasion for the more solemn expression of Christian gratitude, or the renewal of Christian obligation; but it could not be thought to give the prospect of any special spiritual benefit, beyond what might be found in an equally ardent exercise of devotion on any other religious occasion. The ordinary grace of God might have been relied upon for co-operation in such an effort of the mind to think more closely on the love of their dying Lord, or to feel it more deeply; but, as it should seem, only as equal efforts would be assisted, in the common acts of pious supplication. Yet still, on this ground, it might not have been easy to account satisfactorily for introducing, into a simple commemoration, any outward or visible part. The merely natural effect of the eucharistic signs on the external senses, would hardly explain their adoption in a religion in which rites and ceremonies were so professedly to give place to spiritual worship; and it would be still more difficult to conceive, how the eating and drinking of those visible symbols should be an essential co-ingredient in the exercise of a purely commemorative devotion.

But, in ascribing to the eucharistic symbols the instrumental effectiveness with which the significant word of their Divine Master had appeared to invest them, the Apostles would see, in that institution, a provision for their spiritual consolation

and benefit, in which all their pre-existing habits of mind were consulted, and all their mental and moral exigencies richly supplied. The nature of the eucharistic Sacrament was clearly such as to have in it no other virtue than what flowed into it from Him by whom it was instituted. The eating of bread, and drinking of wine, had, in itself, neither conduciveness, nor any obvious congeniality, to a spiritual purpose. It could, therefore, have only that precise import which our Redeemer was pleased to give to it; namely, that it was a visible method appointed by him, of spiritually eating his flesh, and spiritually drinking his blood; and that it must accordingly derive its spiritual efficacy from the concomitancy of his omnipotent power. The Eucharist, when thus regarded, would be, to the disciples of our Lord, such a pledge as was given them in no other instance, of their living by his life, being strong through his strength, and growing in grace by a vital effluence from himself.

The means otherwise afforded them of building themselves up in their most holy faith, they would, doubtless, value and improve. But, in this super-added provision, there was a source of satisfaction peculiar to itself. In all other exercises of religion the mind was to contribute its own exertions, and, though subordinately, yet directly, to minister to its own benefit or comfort. In the eucharistic institution alone, human co-operation could have no share in the effect, because the medium employed could communicate influence or blessing only through the direct operation of Almighty Power. It was not to be questioned, that, in every instance

in which spiritual benefit was conferred, the goodness of God was to be regarded as its supreme source. But where the rational powers of man intervened, whether those of the recipient himself, or of any human helper of his faith, the sensible advantage would seem, more or less, to resemble the blessings of nature and providence, which are apparently the result of general laws. It might, therefore, have appeared as reasonable as it was gracious, that, for the perpetual comfort and assurance of the church, in the highest and noblest instance in which divine blessing was to be conferred, the supreme source of that blessing should condescend to be its direct and immediate dispenser ; and should prove himself to be such, by employing means of communication which, venerable and impressive as they should become, by being made, not merely the instruments of his power, but the effectual representatives of himself,¹ would be not only weak, but fruitless, in any other hands than his own.

If we may believe these views to have presented themselves to the minds of the Apostles, we must also suppose them to have been heightened in their effect, as far as that was possible, by the pre-existing habits already adverted to.

It must be remembered that the Jewish religion was not wholly typical ; on the contrary, it contained much which was naturally and intrinsically attractive and endearing. Above all, the special presence of God in his holy temple, held a place in

¹ " He that eateth *me*, even he shall live by me."—*John*, vi. 57.

the mind of every pious Jew, for which nothing but a full equivalent could compensate. We are to observe, that there was nothing in that presence except the limitation to one exclusive spot, which savoured of an imperfect dispensation. It was not to the infancy of human nature, but to human nature itself, that this instance of divine condescension was engaging. That presence had, indeed, for ages, been as much a matter of faith, as the glory of God in heaven; but it was not the less apprehended as an invaluable and delightful reality. This it was which made the Mount Sion attractive to every devout Israelite; which induced the inspired Anna not to depart from the temple; which detained the child Jesus when Mary and Joseph had departed from Jerusalem;¹ and which afterward roused his holy zeal to an intensity never manifested on any other occasion.

Had nothing parallel to that grace and glory of the Old dispensation been retained in the New, a want might have been felt which all its other benefits would not have supplied; but, in the Eucharist, as seen in the light of our blessed Saviour's words, there was the imperishable pledge of an equally glorious, but far more gracious presence,—a presence, not confined to a single spot, but to be realised, in our Lord's appointed way, wherever his word should be received, and his church established; a presence not merely to be approached with confidence of being heard and

¹ It would seem that our Lord's answer, to his mother and Joseph, St. Luke, ii. 49, might most fitly be rendered, "Why is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be in the house of my Father?"

mercifully regarded, but with which an incomparably nearer communion was to be vouchsafed, and from which, an inexpressibly more efficacious influence was to be communicated, than, in the former dispensation, could even have been conceived.

All, therefore, and far more than all, that the ark of the covenant had been to pious Israelites, the sacrament of the Eucharist must, on the grounds which have been stated, have appeared to the Apostles and their initiated disciples. Our Lord's assurance to them, in general terms, had been, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world:" and a still more consolatory promise had been given, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The eucharistic institution, understood as has been stated, would necessarily imply the most substantial fulfilment of those comprehensive declarations. However otherwise the great head of the church should be present with his members, he must then be specially present with them when he gave them spiritual life and nourishment from himself.

In the very idea of such a communication there was something so sublime and heavenly, that the more it was dwelt upon, the more it would fill the mind with all the impressive results to which it led. And it might not be too much to say, that the pillar of cloud or of fire could not have been to the senses of the Israelites a surer token of the special presence of Jehovah, than the consecrated symbols in the Eucharist were to the minds of the

Apostles and their fellow-Christians of an equally special, and much more endearing and effective, presence of the incarnate Word. In this ordinance they would see a mercy-seat as sensibly established as in the former dispensation ; but with far nobler hopes and better promises : and in the light of our Lord's infallible words, it would place before their mental eye a Shechinah as real as that which had visibly possessed itself of the Holy of Holies, at the dedication of Solomon's temple. In witnessing our Lord's institution of the Eucharist, and his divinely significant consecration of its symbols, they had seen and heard what was far more than equivalent to that earlier manifestation. They would rely on the faithfulness of their omnipotent Lord, at all times, and in every instance, to verify his own words, by making the eucharistic elements to be *effectually* what he had named them : and, in this assurance, they would contemplate him as not less graciously and influentially present in those holy mysteries, than he had been personally present in those interviews with which he had favoured them before ascending to his throne of glory in the heavens.

I have thus ventured to suppose, as matter of moral certainty, the estimate of the Eucharist which would be made by the Apostles under the mere guidance of our Saviour's expressions. But I am ready to acknowledge, that the force of this argument may not be felt to imply actual demonstration, and that its success will be in proportion only to a certain mental pre-disposition. Many

will, doubtless, still ask, If these things are so, why has not this view of the Eucharist been expressly given in Holy Scripture? If such had been the judgment of the Apostles, might we not expect to find an explicit declaration of it in some part of the Apostolic writings?

This question would be reasonable; but the answer is easy; since, through the wisdom of Heaven, St. Paul has been led, by certain irregularities among the Corinthians, so to speak of the Eucharist in his first epistle to that church, as to place the Apostolic doctrine beyond possibility of doubt.

It appears that many members of the Corinthian church had defiled their Christian purity, by participating in feasts celebrated in heathen temples, and consisting of viands which had been offered at the shrine of idols. Of this practice, as might well be supposed, St. Paul speaks with horror; but it is very remarkable, that, in his expostulation, he dwells neither on the sanctity inherent in the Christian character generally, nor on the spiritual privileges and blessings so often the subject of his discourse: instead of this, he urges his charge on the single ground, that the mysterious sanctity of the Lord's Supper was grossly and dangerously profaned by any intermixture, in its recipients, with the table and the cup of demons.

The Apostle commences by adducing the case of the ancient Israelites, whose special relation to God he so describes, as to evince the close analogy between their peculiar circumstances and those of Christians generally, in point of character-

istic distinctions, and of the Corinthian Christians particularly, in point of crime and punishment.

The analogy in characteristic distinctions, he thus intimates : “ They ” (the Israelites) “ were all baptised unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea ; and they did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink ; for they drank of that spiritual rock which followed them ; and that rock was Christ.”

It need not be remarked, that, in this exordium, St. Paul, with all the skill of a master in discourse, lays a ground for making the holy Eucharist his theme. But does he not do more than this ? Does he not, even already, intimate the specific view which *he* took of that ordinance, and in which he meant to represent it ? The Israelites, he would have it understood, resembled Christians, in having been sustained with spiritual meat and spiritual drink ; that is, evidently, with meat and drink which had, in their nature and substance, something supernatural and divine. But what, by consequence, does this pointed parallel imply respecting its Christian counterpart ? It was, surely, far from St. Paul’s thoughts to give to the type the greater, and to the antitype the lesser glory. It follows, therefore, that in so designating the sustenance of the Israelites, he intended to convey, even beforehand, a like idea of the eucharistic symbols : these, he implies, are also spiritual meat, and spiritual drink ; that is, have in them a transcendent quality, similarly supernatural and divine.

After an enumeration of instances in which the Israelites had signally transgressed, and were as

signally corrected, the Apostle enters directly upon his subject ; and, in the first place, appeals to the settled belief of Christians, universally, respecting the nature of the Lord's Supper : " The cup of blessing," says he, " which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ? "

This interrogatory form deserves particular notice ; it implies that there was, already, such unanimous consent in the Christian church respecting the nature and import of the Lord's Supper, as to make it necessary only to take for granted the matter of that belief. Let, then, the terms of the Apostle, thus deliberately and decisively applied, be attentively weighed : he does not give a general estimate of the Eucharist, as being the most important and appropriate act of Christian devotion ; but he distinctly and emphatically specifies the mysterious character and efficacy which the material elements of bread and wine acquired by their consecration to the holy purpose for which they were appointed.

In a word, according to the Apostle, and that universal belief to which he appeals, the commemorative celebration of the Eucharist, as a devotional act, is not that which makes it peculiarly beneficial and venerable ; but it is so, because, in this ordinance, the aliments which Christ has appointed, become, through his designation and blessing, the direct vehicles of his own divine influences, to capable receivers. Nothing short of this notion would accord with the ascribing of spiritual virtue,

specially, to each visible sign ; and, what is still more, to each, not as becoming efficacious, through *the act of receiving*, but as endued with efficacy, through *the act of consecration*.

For, we must observe, it is not “the cup of blessing which we *drink*,” nor “the bread which we *eat*,” that are declared to be the communion of the blood, and the communion of the body, of Christ ; but it is said, “the cup of blessing which we *bless*, and the bread which we *break* ;” clearly indicating, that the eucharistic elements, when once solemnly sanctified according to our Lord’s appointment, are to be regarded as being in an inexplicable, but deeply awful manner, the receptacles of that heavenly virtue, which his divine power qualifies them to convey. On such a subject, it would be presumptuous to indulge in any hypothetic speculation. But it would be still more blamable, and at least as prejudicial, not to allow to the Apostle’s words all their due import ; especially as those very words contain the only direct definition of the Eucharist in the sacred writings.

If the language of St. Paul could need elucidation, it might be strictly compared with the several expressions of our Lord, already adverted to ; but these must, of themselves, recur, and at once fix the unequivocal, however mysterious, import, of *the communion of his body*, and *the communion of his blood*. In this accumulated light, it must be felt impossible that the thing signified should be disproportioned to the force of the expression ; and the conclusion, on the whole, must inevitably

appear to be, that as our Lord had taught his followers to expect, from his divine person, such influences of his body and of his blood, as should be, not figurative or illusive, but substantive and vital; and as, in his institution of the Eucharist, he constituted the consecrated bread and wine the virtual representatives of his body and blood, and, by consequence, the effective vehicles of their influences to all capable partakers,—so, what our Lord had thus declared, and thus established, is comprehensively contained, and, as if solemnly countersigned, in the clear and authoritative recognition of his Apostle.

But even this emphatical passage is only a part of what St. Paul has delivered on the subject of the Eucharist. As, in the wisdom of God, it was on this occasion alone to be directly the theme of discourse; so, accordingly, the Apostle seems anxious to leave nothing unsaid, that could illustrate the doctrine, or enforce the consequent duty. Having, therefore, by his interrogatory appeal, called attention to the profound and awful nature of the Eucharist, he proceeds to argue, from the case of Jewish sacrifices, with what cautious veneration this Christian mystery ought to be treated. “Consider Israel, after the flesh,” he says; and asks—“Were not they, who ate of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar?” The argument is brief, but the inference cannot be mistaken. The Apostle clearly implies, that the same kind of sanctity, which had been ascribed to things offered on God’s altar, under the old law, was now to be ascribed to the eucharistic symbols. That sanctity, he inti-

mates to have been given to the Jewish sacrifices, by the altar on which they had been offered; according to our Lord's declaration, that it is "the altar which sanctifieth the gift;" and *such* he conceives to have been the communication of sanctity to the matter of the sacrifice, that the partakers in the one participated also in the other. Such, then, he would have it understood, was strictly in its kind, however more spiritual in its purpose, the sanctity derived by the eucharistic symbols from their high designation, and, through them, conveyed unto the persons of those who partook of them.

That this was, distinctly, St. Paul's meaning, is confirmed by the design which he had in view; namely, that those Corinthians, who had frequented idolatrous banquets, might be awakened to a full sense, not only of the gross profaneness, but also of the personal danger, of their conduct. On this particular point he proceeds to enlarge. Even already, however, he has said enough to shew, that, in his judgment, a divinely effective virtue became, through consecration, mysteriously united with the eucharistic symbols; and was, through them, communicated beneficially to capable receivers; and, as it should seem, in some such awful manner, to *every* receiver, as to make his contact with any unholy thing, a matter not less of peril to himself, than of insult to the majesty of Heaven.

In continuing his expostulation, the Apostle retains the idea of sacrificial communicative influence; and applies it to that criminal intermixture, which it was his immediate object to reprobate.

“The things,” says he, “which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I would not that ye should be communicants of demons.”¹ Such, therefore, is his deduction, merely from the contrariety between sacrifices to God and sacrifices to demons. But the particular subject of which the Apostle was treating, called for yet stronger denouncement; he, therefore, immediately adds,—“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons; ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and the table of demons. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?”

The strength of these expressions is remarkable. It seems as if they were intended to convey all possible awfulness of admonition: “Ye *cannot*” do it, says the Apostle, as if he meant to pronounce, that there was some provision in the invisible world, as certain in its operation as the laws of nature, in readiness to avenge such profanation; to which mysterious vengeance they would infallibly expose themselves, should they neglect his warning. But on what does he rest the certainty of that result? Not on the moral contrariety of the two acts, however real or extreme, but strictly on the opposite import and effectiveness of the two cups, and of the two tables, as being respectively the mediums of communion with the Lord, and of communion with demons.

¹ As before, in the 18th verse, the Israelites, by eating the sacrifice, were *κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυσιαστήριου* (partakers of the altar), so, in the 20th verse, the Corinthians, by eating idol sacrifices, are *κοινωνοὶ τῶν δαιμόνων* (communicants of demons).

It is, in fact, the profane and unnatural mixture of things the most sacred with things the most unhallowed, in this visible world (and that, in their own persons), with which St. Paul charges the Corinthians ; and, as if he himself was struck with inexpressible horror at the outrage to Omnipotence itself, which such enormity involved, he gives his feelings vent, in an appeal to all that was impressible in human nature, " Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy ? are we stronger than he ? "

It was not possible to add greater weight to all that he had spoken, than by this interrogatory. The Jewish high-priest could not have given a more terrible warning to some daring intruder into the Holy of Holies. The words are awful ; they are as pregnant in meaning, as they are resistless in force. They attest the feeling with which St. Paul had spoken, and guard his words against even the possibility of a figurative construction. And here, for the time, he drops the subject ; perhaps, that an interval for reflection on all he had just said, and especially on his last most awful expostulation, might the better prepare the minds of those to whom he wrote, for what was yet to come.

He had, in fact, another enormity to complain of, and for that purpose he reserves what is, most strictly, the sequel of his former discourse. He had ended, in the first instance, with the judgments of God, as matter of awful apprehension. From this point he proceeds, when, in the next chapter, he brings his second charge against them, respecting the Eucharist ; namely, that of treating it with

disrespect, in the very act of celebration. In his animadversions on this flagrant violation of Christian duty, he appeals to their own experience, for frequent verifications, even already, of that tremendous menace, by which he had, as it were, riveted and sealed his preceding remonstrance.

That he may the more surely gain his purpose, he first lays the strongest possible ground, by reciting the record of the eucharistic institution, not only as received by him from the report of his brethren, but as directly made known by divine revelation to himself. After repeating those quick and powerful words, which had given imperishable dignity and virtue to that bread, and that cup, as implying the shewing forth of the Redeemer's death, as well as (what had been before dwelt upon) the communion of his body and blood, he thus proceeds in his admonition :—" Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

I have quoted this passage at large, that I may call attention to the closeness with which the Apostle adheres to the idea of the distinct and specific elements, rather than to the general act of commemoration or communion. There is a kind of physiognomy in language, by which we seem to see, as well as understand, the mind of

the writer. Thus, in the passage now transcribed, we not only receive the instruction intended to be conveyed, but, in the precision of the terms, the strictness with which they are adhered to, and the energy with which they are applied, we have, as it were, the very stamp and signature of St. Paul's own mind and heart. Not only, from first to last, does he keep the eucharistic elements in his view, but he says nothing which does not expressly refer to them. Thus, as the crime is eating or drinking unworthily, so the punishment is the *eating and drinking* of judgment (that is, of bodily infliction); as if the very receiving of those holy things into the human person, when defiled by polluting contact, or desecrated by actual irreverence, produced, of itself (like the Ark of the Covenant when profanely treated), the calamity or destruction of the offender. Again, the desecrating irreverence is stated to arise from not discerning the *Lord's Body*; that is, from approaching the sacramental symbols without due discrimination of their transcendent quality. In this awful designation of the matter of the Sacrament, the Apostle seems to have thought his subject carried to its height. What more, in truth, could even St. Paul have added, either for the correction of the Corinthians, or for the instruction of all succeeding Christians?

He, therefore, merely strengthens what he has said, by referring to those divine judgments which had been already inflicted. "For this cause," says he, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." The Corinthians themselves had, probably, been suffering these calamities, without

adverting to their actual source. But this awful explanation would, at once, lead them to compare their crime and punishment with those signal cases of a like nature, recorded in Holy Scripture; with that, for example, of Nadab and Abihu, who offered strange fire on God's altar; with that of the Philistines, who brought the ark into the house of Dagon; with that of the Bethshemites, whose profane curiosity led them to look into the ark, and who became the victims of their own presumption; and with that of Uzzah, who drew his own instant death from the ark by an inconsiderate touch. They must, at once, have seen and acknowledged, that what was just and necessary in those ancient instances of divine chastisement, must be accounted equally just and necessary in the case then existing; since every reason that could be conceived for fencing the symbols of divine presence and power, under the Old Testament, must hold good for an equal fencing of similar symbols, under the New Testament. It could not, for one moment, be imagined, that either the altar, or the ark of the Lord, should be guarded by more terrible majesty, than that which, on equally divine authority, was to be "discerned" as "the Lord's Body."

But does not the awful warning, respecting "eating or drinking unworthily," intimate, by parity of reason, or rather on a still surer ground, the divine potency of the elements to all qualified receivers? For, if to eat or drink unworthily, is to eat and drink divine malediction; then, no less surely, to eat and drink worthily, is to eat and drink

divine benediction. It is evidently, according to St. Paul, the mysterious sanctity of the thing unworthily received, which makes it the vehicle of vengeance to him by whom it is profaned. But, if the sacred symbols be thus endued with a supernatural influence to avenge their abuse, they must possess a like supernatural influence where they are duly and reverently received, to benefit and bless the receiver. In fact, we must conclude, that it is their being divinely fitted to bless, which alone could give them an avenging power, when profaned; and, consequently, that the Apostle, in adding this last distinct and emphatical declaration, confirms all that he had said before, and puts the Christian doctrine of the Eucharist beyond the possibility of question.

To understand the mysterious term of the Lord's Body in any such gross sense as has been fancied in the Church of Rome, would be to overlook our Redeemer's expressions, already in part quoted: "It is the spirit which quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

But let us not, therefore, rush into an opposite extreme; nor treat the words of an inspired Apostle as we would not treat those of any common intelligent writer. Let us observe, that every expression St. Paul uses, tends, as it were, more and more, to invest the sacramental symbols with an ineffable measure of derivative dignity and instrumental virtue. He gives no shadow of pretext for any carnal interpretation; but he says all that could be said, to make us regard "that

bread and that cup," not only as the visible pledge, but the effective organ of a vital communication from the invisible, but then specially operative, and therefore specially present, Redeemer. For he alone it is, who could make those symbols to be, in virtue and efficacy, his body and blood.

In thus explaining the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the Apostle most truly tells us a mystery; but a mystery which (as has been observed) the first Christians were prepared, by every divine analogy, to receive; and which could scarcely need vindication in these latter times, if the zeal of contending Christians did not so generally neglect all truth, even of Holy Scripture itself, which does not directly serve as a weapon against the error, real or supposed, which they are anxious to refute, or as a support to the particular theory which it is their purpose to maintain.

On this account chiefly, rather than because laboured elucidation was at all necessary, have I dwelt so long on the Apostle's expressions. I have not wished to add any thing to their strength, much less to turn them from their intended aim. I have been merely anxious, by the minutest attention, and the most sober consideration, to elicit from them their precise and entire meaning; especially as it has pleased the divine wisdom, that these passages of the 10th and 11th chapters of the first Corinthians should be the sole instance in which the doctrine of the Eucharist is *infallibly* stated and explained.

But, perhaps, it may still be doubted, whether

it be essential to the due estimation and beneficial use of the Lord's supper, that the Apostle's expressions should be as literally interpreted as they have been in the preceding observations; and whether he may not be considered as, in some measure, employing a figurative mode of speech, to which it will not be unreasonable to give a proportionally qualified construction.

To this I would answer, that in every passage of Holy Scripture, as well as in that more immediately in view, it ought to be our first care to ascertain in what manner the divine speaker, or writer, means to be understood. If in a figurative manner, some key will assuredly be given us, whereby to arrive at the simple and solid sense. This, perhaps, will be intimated in the very terms which are used, by the obvious impossibility of any other interpretation: or, at least, the context will afford such light, as to explain the import, if not also to illustrate the fitness, of the metaphorical expressions. It would be easy to produce examples; but the passage particularly before us, could, on no reasonable ground, be included in them; for I conceive it would be impossible to point out *one* strictly figurative term in the entire discourse.

A figurative term is that, which, by substituting some other term or terms, may be translated into plain language. But if the expressions of St. Paul respecting the Eucharist be tried by this rule, their import, be it ever so mysterious, cannot be proved metaphorical. For instance, what plainer terms could we pretend to substitute for *the com-*

munion of the blood, or the communion of the body of the Lord? Nay, the very term of *the Lord's body* is so used by him, as infinitely to transcend all attempts at adequate explication. When the Church of Christ is called his body, we see at once that it is a figure, from our acquaintance with the subject thus denominated. But when we read of the Lord's eucharistic body, we read of something not otherwise made known to us; and, therefore, cannot similarly resolve its import into a plainer notion; which will be no less the case with our Saviour's several expressions already adverted to. To weigh the consonant terms of our Lord and his Apostles with sobriety and humility, will be to feel, that they unitedly assure us of a heavenly and spiritual reality, divine in its source, infallible in its efficacy, inconceivably venerable in its nature and character, and no less dreadful in its profanation. What is said, therefore, on this subject, is not figurative, but it is mysterious and transcendental; because, obviously, the thing signified rises, not only above the language, but the conception, of man. St. Paul had learned what he delivers (he tells us) by revelation; most probably when he was caught up into paradise, and heard "unspeakable words." When, therefore, the Apostle speaks, as in the instance before us, of that which is heavenly and divine, we must, in reason, believe, that, however exalted his language, the matter of which he speaks is incomparably more exalted; and that if we would do justice to him, to the subject, and to ourselves, we must understand his terms in the fulness of their import, as, even then,

we shall only see by means of a glass obscurely ; and therefore be liable, through the least aberration of our mental vision, either to see delusively, or not to see at all.

But may it not be apprehended, that the ascribing of such instrumental importance to the material elements of bread and wine, as the literal interpretation of St. Paul's expression would imply, involves an inconsistency with that purely spiritual character, which is regarded as the great distinction of the gospel dispensation ?

To this it might with reason be answered, that, in forming our notions of the gospel dispensation, we are not to trust to any general conclusions, however plausible, but simply to its own representations of itself. From these we shall learn, that, though the gospel is purely spiritual in its ends, the means which it employs are most wisely adapted and proportioned to the mixed nature of man. It is the exquisiteness of this accommodation which constitutes the most conclusive internal evidence, that the Author of Christianity needed not that any should testify to him of man, inasmuch as he knew what was in man. To a creature consisting, not of spirit only, but of soul and body also, how disproportionate would have been a scheme of moral improvement, much more of moral disenthralment, adapted exclusively to the highest portion of his nature !

But the fact is, that the gospel commenced in an accommodation to man's animal exigencies, which was as admirable, as it was gracious ; and

which the hosts of heaven contemplated with delight and wonder. The incarnation of the co-eternal Son, through which St. John was enabled to declare, what he and his fellow-Apostles “had seen with their eyes, what they had looked upon, and their hands had handled, of the Word of life,” was, in the first instance, so to consult human nature in its animal and sensitive capacity, as to give the strongest pledge, that a dispensation, thus introduced, would, in every subordinate provision, manifest the same spirit, and operate on the same principle.

For could it be thought, that the first wonderful accommodation of Godhead to the sensitive apprehensions of man should be wholly temporary? and that, though that mystery of godliness was ever to be regarded as the vital source of all spiritual benefits and blessings, no continuance of this wise and gracious condescension should be manifested in the means, whereby its results were to be perpetuated, and made effectual?

May we not rather conclude, that, on the same wise and gracious consideration which induced the divine nature to enshrine itself in a human person, that, through that medium, there might be a more familiar, more impressive, and more engaging communication of God with man; it would be deemed by the divine wisdom and goodness most suitable to man's natural feelings and conceptions to convey to him the special influences of incarnate Deity, through a medium similarly adapted to his imagination and his senses? And when we believe (as, if we are Christians, we must believe), that he,

who was God over all, united himself to so low a thing as human flesh, in order to become the fountain of those influences, we surely need not question the credibility of his conveying those influences through any other work of his own hands which he saw it fit to appoint. When he had condescended to embody himself in our flesh, that he might, more conformably to the laws of our nature, give spiritual life to the world, and when he was establishing a perpetual ordinance, expressly to represent that primary mystery, and to subserve its purpose by instrumentally communicating its virtue; was it either unsuitable, or improbable, that the heavenly grace, to be thus communicated, should be, as it were, embodied in two of the purest and simplest provisions which, as Creator of the world, he had given for the sustenance of our animal life, and the refreshment of our animal weakness?

The expediency of such a method, as peculiarly fitted to impress the mind of man, is illustrated (as has been observed) by all the analogous instances already adverted to. In no case could the divine power itself have required any medium of operation; and, therefore, every thing of this kind must have been employed, in order to an easier apprehension, and a deeper feeling, of the source from which the benefit proceeded. It was chiefly to give such an apprehension, and excite such a feeling, that miraculous works were wrought; and that end could not have been more infallibly secured, than by enduing with supernatural efficacy

an instrumental means, which, in itself, was utterly inefficacious. It was obviously by no general law, that a benefit thus conferred had been accomplished; nor would it require any reasoning to establish the belief, that the virtue which had so wonderfully embodied itself in a material vehicle, could be no less than a real and substantive influence from the divine omnipotence.

Was it not then, if possible, still more requisite, that a like apprehension, and a like feeling, should be ensured, respecting the highest and holiest communication that had ever proceeded from God to man? Estimating the blessing conveyed in the Eucharist, by the united representation of our Lord, and of St. Paul, can we suppose, that any suitable means would be omitted of attesting to our reason and natural feelings the divinity of that blessing? And what could be more suitable, than that the same expedient, which had been employed to impress human feeling with the sense of divine operation in so many inferior instances, should be employed for the same necessary purpose, in the very highest instance in which man, while on this earth, was to be the subject of divine operation, and the receiver of supernatural blessings?

Instead, therefore, of questioning the literal import of St. Paul's expressions, shall we not rather recognise in that import, the uniformity of the divine proceedings? and the depth of that wisdom, which, not more for the humbling of the proud than for the consolation of the humble, continues, in the sublimest instance on this side

of heaven, to make the weakness of the instrument an irrefragable evidence that the blessing received is directly and purely from himself? The assurance of this fact is invaluable; and it would be impossible to imagine any more suitable way in which assurance could have been given. It leaves to faith its entire exercise, inasmuch as no extraordinary impression is made, either on the external or the internal sense; but it exercises faith in the highest and happiest manner, by presenting to it an object, which, in its nature, and in its nearness, must be felt to unite heaven with earth, and God with man. Such is the reckoning which even reason must make, if the actual transmission of divine influence, through the elements, be once admitted. We, doubtless, *can* conceive heavenly influence to be communicated without any medium whatever; but we *cannot* conceive a spiritual influence, conveyed through such material mediums, to be any other than heavenly and divine.

But, in addition to what we may deduce from the general method of the divine proceedings, and from the reason of the case, do we not find by actual experience, that such an unequivocal pledge of divine operation was necessary, to preserve the belief of such operation "whole and undefiled," in the Christian Church? The fact of strictly supernatural grace, though in itself so consolatory, is retained with difficulty in the sceptical mind of man. It has, accordingly, been modified in various ways by some persons, and boldly rejected by others. To establish, therefore, an ordinance,

in the obvious aspect, and consistent import of which, the doctrine of strictly supernatural grace should ever have a divine attestation, was to perpetuate this most important point of faith in the surest and most practical manner. It provided for the close and candid Christian reasoner, imperishable premises, leading to the most certain conclusions; and it afforded, to the simply devout, an instruction, through the senses to the mind, which would teach deeper things than language could convey; and make an impression on the inmost feelings, of which their indistinct apprehension would neither abate the awfulness, nor substantially prevent the utility.

It is, on the contrary, to be remarked, that where the notion of the Lord's Supper has been such as to exclude the instrumental efficacy of the sacramental symbols, the ordinance itself has appeared to lose its interest and attractiveness. Of this fact we have decisive evidence, in a complaint made by the pious Doddridge, in one of his sermons to young persons, wherein he invites religious youth to early communion. "I have frequently found," he says, "and I believe it has been the experience of many of my brethren in the ministry, that young persons, not only of a very sober and regular conduct, but even those who have appeared most deeply impressed with the concerns of their souls, and experimentally acquainted, so far as we can judge, with regenerating grace, have, in many instances, shewn a strange coldness to this blessed institution; and we have known not a few, who have grown old

in the neglect of it !” But whence this indifference, which the worthy Doddridge so candidly acknowledges, and so sincerely laments ? Did it not arise from his and his brethren’s view of the Lord’s Supper, as a mere commemorative and covenanting transaction, in which grace was to be, as in other religious ordinances, exercised and improved, but no special communication of heavenly influence to be expected ? Had the Eucharist been regarded as a divinely instituted conduit of supernatural grace, directly from its fountain, could such persons as Doddridge describes have been remiss in their attendance ? In that case, would not their love and value of the Lord’s Supper be in exact proportion to their love and value of religion itself ? But whenever the strictly supernatural influence of the Eucharist is overlooked, or unacknowledged, (and such will naturally, if not necessarily, be the consequence of rejecting the mysterious designation of the symbols), attention to this Christian ordinance will be little more than gratuitous ; a natural effect, perhaps, of Christian ardour, because it is matter of divine injunction, but not a necessary result of Christian sincerity. It is, in this view of it, merely a positive law of Christianity, acting exclusively upon the feelings of fear, of duty, or of gratitude. Contemplated as the actual vehicle of Christ’s own ineffable influences to the capable receiver, it becomes a matter of intrinsic interest ; to neglect which, would be to neglect both present and everlasting salvation.

Besides, the sacred Eucharist, when thus con-

ceived, becomes not only more attractive to the upright Christian, but also much more consolatory. When this holy ordinance is supposed to rise above the other means of grace, not by any appropriate influence of omnipotent power, but only by its more direct reference to the mercy and goodness of the dying Redeemer, the Christian, in partaking of it, can expect benefit in proportion only to the actual state of his devotional feelings. Let his confidence in the promised grace of Christ be ever so sincere, his hope of a fresh communication will rise or fall, with the conscious ardour, or the conscious coldness, of his affections. But these not being at human command, and seldom or never moving in exact proportion to the settled purposes of the heart, the consequence, on the whole, will naturally be, that when animating influences are most needed, they will be least expected. Whereas, if there be a persuasion, that divine grace is communicated in and through the Sacrament, by a special exercise of divine power, it will follow that, not an inability to co-operate, but solely an incapacity to receive, will obstruct the communication.¹

The importance of this distinction, I humbly

¹ It is not possible within such narrow limits as I have prescribed to myself, to guard the thought expressed in this paragraph, against the danger of misapprehension. To answer this purpose, I must have gone into something like digression, which would have perplexed the thread of my discourse. I will, therefore, merely observe, that I proceed upon a principle of the Catholic Church, rested in by the Revisers of our Liturgy in 1661, when conferring, previously, with the Non-Conformist Divines,—namely, that “God’s sacraments have their effects, where the receiver doth not, *ponere obicem*, put any bar against them.”—Account of the Proceedings of the Commissioners of both Persuasions, &c. p. 99.

conceive, will be felt by every one who has religiously inspected himself. In efforts of the heart to rise toward God, *to will* may be most sincerely present with us, when how to perform that which is good we find not. Even in an advanced stage of piety, there may be least power of mental exertion, when its sensible necessity is greatest : for instance, under infirmity of body or mind ; or when some distressing event has caused what St. Peter calls “ heaviness, through manifold temptations.” How comfortable, then, amid this “ weakness of our mortal nature,” to reflect, not only that God *can* internally aid and strengthen us by his own secret influences, independently of our active co-operation, but that he has assured us of this unspeakable blessing by such a permanent pledge and means of its accomplishment, as, by its very character and nature, supersedes all co-operation, and requires solely the faculty of reception. If only we are athirst, we have here a fountain of life to which we may indeed come without money, and without price ; and which comes to us without any diluting intermixture, as immediately flowing from the throne of God, and of the Lamb.

But this view of the Lord’s Supper not only ministers to encouragement, where encouragement is wanting, but it also serves to repress all spiritual pride, and undue self-gratulation. It is observable, that those sincere maintainers of God’s effectual grace, who do not regard the Eucharist as the actual conduit of its conveyance, deem it necessary to guard the supposed possessors of that grace against robbing God of his honour, by ascribing to

themselves what they owe to his bounty. And there can be no doubt, that such a false reckoning is much more than incidental, where the view is directed only to those means of grace, in which the human faculties so co-operate, as to make it impossible to draw a distinct line between what supervenient grace does in the transaction, and what man does for himself. But wherever the Eucharist is considered as the appropriate vehicle of the animating and strengthening grace of Christ to man, such cautions as those adverted to will hardly be requisite.

He who clearly and confidently expects to receive in “the cup of blessing which is blessed, the communion of Christ’s blood,” and in “the bread which is broken, the communion of Christ’s body,” will naturally and necessarily depreciate all that he could do for himself, in comparison with that transcendent communication. In the sublime simplicity of the eucharistic institution, the humble expectant of heavenly blessing is abstracted from all human agency of others, or of himself. The solemn words used from the earliest times in both the eastern and western churches, and, through the distinguishing providence of God, preserved in our own, “*Sursum corda*,” and the reply of the faithful, “*Habemus ad Dominum*,”¹ speak the one common feeling, infallibly excited, by “discerning the Lord’s body” in the consecrated symbols; and, by consequence, looking for the blessing exclusively from Him who makes those elements “the hiding of his

¹ “Lift up your hearts! R. We lift them up unto the Lord.”

power.”¹ The mind, thus impressed, will feel no tendency to ascribe to itself the benefits it may have received. If spiritual life be consciously felt to gain strength and ascendancy, the fixed belief of a sacramental conveyance of that life, will, at once, increase the feeling of delight and of humility;—of delight, because the influences thus communicated are so purely from the Godhead itself, as to imply a real commencement, as well as certain pledge of everlasting beatitude;—of humility, because the direct and unmixed apprehension of the divine power and presence, which the discernment of the Lord’s body in the symbols must imply, cannot but impress upon the mind of man such a sense of his own comparative baseness and nothingness, and inspire such an habitual and deep sobriety, as could not be conceived equally producible through any other existing means in this lower world.

And as the lowliness thus infused is of the same nature with that of angels, and has in it no tendency to superstitious weakness, so the satisfaction which is enjoyed has no relation to enthusiastic illusion. This latter is always the offspring of a supposed distinguishing communication from God; a peculiar afflatus, as it is imagined, by the mere will of the Spirit; and not subject to be controlled, even by the clearest rules of Scripture. But, however elevating the idea of the eucharistic intercourse with God, the mind is hereby raised to no giddy height; the elevation which must be experienced

¹ Habakkuk, iii. 4.

under a full apprehension of this divine provision, is as sober as it is sublime. The vouchsafement is neither personal nor partial, but extended to every capable member of the Christian Church : the apparatus is such, as to act neither on the sensitive nor the passionate feelings, but solely on the purest perceptions of the mind, and the soundest sensibilities of the heart : and the adorable agency itself has nothing in it akin to the whirlwind, the earthquake, or the fire ; but, in this instance, operates as in the great economy of visible nature ; with the same silence, as in causing the earth to vegetate, or the planets to move in their orbits through the heavens. Need it then be said, that the glare of the meteor does not differ more from the light of the sun, than the transports of the enthusiast differ from those exalted apprehensions which deep views of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper must naturally both awaken and sustain in every devout mind and heart ?

I have already adverted to the mysterious communication which the Eucharist imparts, being a pledge of the same divine presence in and with the Christian Church, as the Jewish Church had enjoyed in the inner sanctuary of its Temple. But on this particular point I must beg leave to offer a few additional observations.

I observed, that such a communication of divine influence as could be effected only by the omnipotent power of our Redeemer, must also, of necessity, imply his special and extraordinary presence ; and I inferred, that the Apostles and their brethren would thus feel themselves amply com-

pensated for that noblest of all Jewish privileges, the special residence of Jehovah in the midst of his people ; inasmuch as in the eucharistic institution, estimated as our Lord himself had taught them, their mental eye would recognise a Shechinah as real as that which had taken possession of the Holy of Holies at the dedication of the Temple built by Solomon.

To illustrate the importance of this particular consideration, may it not be remarked, that though the omnipresence of God is a most awful and momentous truth ; yet, even in the best-disposed minds, the sense, merely, of this presence, however it must excite philosophical reverence, would scarcely awaken filial affection ? Then only can we contemplate God as our father, when we have assurance that he regards us as his children ; and that we are, distinctly and individually, within the gracious notice, and under the direct influence, of our Almighty parent.

The patriarchs of old were, doubtless, firm in their belief of the divine omnipresence.¹ But this

¹ The degree and manner in which pious persons, under the Jewish dispensation, were impressed with the divine omnipresence, is admirably exemplified in the 139th Psalm. But the question is, Could that great truth have been either so practically felt, or so magnificently descanted on, except where the established fact of a special presence gave it animation and sustenance ?

The prayer of Solomon, at the dedication of the Temple (1 Kings, viii.), also contains as sublime a recognition of the Divine omnipresence, as could be expressed in words (v. 27) ; and yet every subsequent portion of that noble piece of devotional eloquence, gives evidence of the confidence and consolation which the devout king derived from the anticipation of a *specialty present* God, who *thus*, in boundless mercy, adapted his infinitude to the apprehensions and affections of his limited and dependent creatures.

alone would scarcely have supported them, when they “went forth, not knowing whither they went.” Their supreme consolation arose from the persuasion, that the eye of God was specially upon them, and the hand of God directly and effectively with them; to which happy confidence they had been raised, by such manifestations of his special presence, repeatedly made to them, as were, at the time, a matter of unutterable comfort, and left behind them a “home-felt delight,” and “sober certainty,” which no earthly circumstances were sufficient to destroy.

In those instances, the awe of infinite Deity was necessarily felt; but this naturally overwhelming sentiment was softened into unutterable peace and joy by such undelusive demonstrations of the Friend and the Father. Hence, the very places where those manifestations had been made became dear to the patriarchs. To those memorable scenes they loved to return, that they might there offer up their homage with excited recollection, deeper gratitude, and more sensible consolation.

The care which was taken to continue, to the posterity of the patriarchs, the same substantial demonstration of a specially present God, has been already dwelt upon; and nothing additional need be said, to shew that this exercise of divine condescension was carried to its utmost height, in the incarnation of the Eternal Word; all former tokens or evidences of the special presence of Jehovah, being, in comparison with the actual advent of Emmanuel, God with us, but preparatives and prelibations.

Taking, then, this long-continued, and, at length, consummated condescension of God to that nature which he had given to man, into our consideration, and keeping in view the entire sameness of human nature, under the Christian, as under the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations; can we imagine, that, when the Godhead had come nearest, and had most intimately familiarised itself with man, all substantive intercourse with our Emmanuel was thenceforward to cease; and that the highest dispensation should wholly want that natural satisfaction with which lower dispensations had been so signally favoured, and which, while man possessed the same organization of spirit, soul, and body, could never cease to be panted after, and virtually demanded?

That the Incarnate Word, after finishing the work of his humiliation, should no longer manifest himself to the external senses, was declared by himself to be expedient, as requisite to that spiritual course in which his disciples were, from that time, to proceed. But it was essential to this very design, that they should consider him as withdrawn from their bodily senses only; and that, as far as their exigencies required, he would still be as really present with them as in the days of his flesh.

But, to establish this assurance, some divine pledge was indispensable. Without some token, by which his special approach to them should be notified, and on their recurrence to which they might confide that he would be invisibly present with them, to aid and bless them, as effectually as if they saw him in the midst of them,—without

such a provision, I say, the Christian dispensation would have had no adequate security against such vagueness of apprehension, and coldness of affection, as would have sunk it far below the level of Jewish devotion. The mind of Christians, in that case, could have rationally contemplated only the divine *omnipresence*; and the piety of the intelligent and sober-minded could have been little better than a more definite and more firmly grounded natural religion. For those who had more reason than affection, such a system might have sufficed. But, if we may say it with due reverence, however the diffusive rays of Deity may not only afford light, but excite a degree of warmth in the spiritual, like those of the sun in the material, world; still, in the one case, as in the other, it is not diffusion of rays, but the concentration of them, which produces a melting ardour.

That the apprehension merely of divine omnipresence should not be adequate to the mental exigencies of man, is the less to be doubted, as it would seem to be insufficient for maintaining the devotion even of higher intelligences. We read in the book of Job, that there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord; and that there was another day when they did the same. Intimations of a like kind are numerous in the Old Testament; and if we attend to what is said in the Apocalypse, we shall find them still more abundant in the New. Doubtless, we can know but little of these heavenly mysteries: still, the uniform fact of a special presence, in the invisible world, is indisputable; and would it not

seem to be almost a self-evident truth, that finite minds, however exalted, can apprehend the Godhead with a satisfaction proportioned to their nature, only by means of a definite manifestation?

That this exigence is increased in man by his terrestrial nature, needs no proof: it is obvious that, in this world, the entire movement of things is adapted to that nature; and thus, our innate tendencies, and our external circumstances, unite to limit and modify our mental action, be the object of that action ever so exalted.

Accordingly, if we examine ourselves, we shall perceive, that, in whatever concerns us, we require definite matter of fact, on which to repose our minds, as much as we need some solid substance to support our bodies. It is of no essential moment through what species of evidence the matter of fact is notified to us, if only the notification have clear marks of authenticity. Hence, in human affairs, there is always more or less exercise of what may fairly be called faith; but always on an understood, or supposed ground of unequivocal reality.

That the various evidences of our divine religion, and particularly the Holy Scriptures, are most wisely and graciously adapted to these habits of the human mind, is indisputable. But whether the utmost plenitude of recorded testimony would meet all our mental exigencies, either as finite or as animalised beings, appears a matter of much less easy determination. It would rather seem, that, to consult fully for our finite, and still more for our terrestrial nature, in addition to all other pro-

visions, there would be need of some impressive and demonstrative pledge and token of the continued direct intercourse of the all-gracious Being with his human servants. Such a pledge and token would completely meet the demand of human nature for matter-of-fact assurance. And if the expediency of supplying that demand could not otherwise be proved, it might be inferred from what has been already adverted to; I mean, the striking tendency of those by whom the notion of any such pledge and token is rejected, either to think illusively of the direct intercourse of God with the human spirit, or else utterly to deny its reality.

But, in following the light of our Redeemer, and the guidance of his Apostle, do we not find, in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, just such a pledge and token of the special presence and real influence of our God and Saviour, as at once meets the demand of our nature, and suits the high aim and intellectual spirit of the Christian dispensation? That life of faith, by which, as Christians, we gradually rise on the moral scale, would have been counteracted, had any impression been made on the senses; whereas the absence of every such impression preserves, from delusive mixture, the moral evidence of reality; and fits the mind for the most sober perception of its practical influence. The great point, to which every circumstance in the institution bears witness, is, that the cup of blessing which is blessed, is the communion of the Lord's blood, and that the bread which is broken, is the communion of his body,

But reason must pronounce, that earthly elements can serve so high and holy a purpose, only as instruments of the divine power; and in such an exercise of the divine power, the special presence of the Almighty agent, according to all our habits of thinking, is necessarily implied. In yielding to the force of St. Paul's first position, we are directly led to this impressive conclusion. And its unutterable weight and interest must concur, with the infinite value of the communicated blessing, to deepen the effect upon every human feeling.

In this view, as often as we approach the table of the Lord we may account ourselves to have admission, in a manner beyond human conception, into the presence-chamber of the King Messiah. Under the full sense of this Christian privilege, we shall not need a Bethel, a Peniel, the Jewish Sanctuary, or even its Holy of Holies. In contemplating, with St. Paul, the mystery of the Eucharist, the Christian cannot but see, that in this sacred ordinance, especially and most eminently, "a new and living way" is opened for him (far above what was granted even to the Jewish high-priest), to "enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus."

Is it, then, too much to say, that the Eucharist, thus apprehended, makes the richest provision, which we could conceive to be made by any stated means in this lower world, for our spiritual sustenance and comfort? While, as a pledge and token of divine presence and influence, its authenticity never can be impaired,—its significancy, to close and sober attention, never obscured,—its

invisible mystery will be as wonderful, as impressive, and as inestimable, in its latest, as in its earliest, celebration. The communion of the Lord's blood, and the communion of the Lord's body, must have, as terms, the same profound import,—as blessings, the same infinite value, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Let not, therefore, the simplicity of what is visible to our bodily sight, veil from our mental eye those invisible realities which are to us so consolatory, and in themselves so glorious. On the contrary, let us recognise the same spirit of meek majesty which veiled its transcendent brightness in the mystery of the incarnation, as still continuing the like gracious condescension in the mystery of the Eucharist ; and let us joyfully and reverently approach to do homage to our King, who, in this his own peculiar institution, comes to diffuse benediction in his mystical Zion, with the same apparent lowliness as when, in conformity with the divine prediction, he entered his literal Jerusalem, “sitting upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.

I might now proceed, in the way of contrast, to remark more particularly on those views of the Lord's Supper which stand opposed to the explanation attempted in these pages. I might possibly shew, that, by rejecting the mysterious instrumentality of the symbols, and thereby reducing the sacrament itself, externally, to a mere ceremony, and internally, to an act of common Christian devotion, besides the liberty thus taken with Holy Scripture, the eucharistic celebration at

once loses all its proportioned hold (proportioned, I mean, to its high origin) on the natural reason, as well as on the natural feelings, of man. But these would be, in some sort, controversial topics; and I trust the grounds on which the claims of the sacred Eucharist have been shewn to rest, do not need to be defended by such auxiliaries.

I might also pursue still farther the line of observation which I have been following. I might speak of that general influence on the whole mass of professing Christians, which might be looked for from the doctrine of St. Paul, respecting the Lord's supper being literally received and adequately promulgated. I might shew, that, by this means, those who are yet insensible to the goodness and wisdom of God, manifested in the Gospel, would be obliged to recognise another of his divine attributes, before which the hardest heart must bow,—His almighty power,—as in direct and continued exercise, within the Christian sanctuary; and I might support the justness of this reckoning, by appealing to the precise purpose for which St. Paul introduced those invaluable declarations, and the manner in which he enforces them. I might dwell upon the indescribable light and warmth, which all the other solemn services of religion would be felt to derive from such a central sphere of Divine presence and operation; and which would even make each hallowed roof to impress him who should come under it, with the feeling of Jacob at Bethel,—“How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of Heaven!!”

But I forbear. I have said enough for my special purpose ; and if it gives satisfaction in the quarter from whence the thought of examining the subject was received, the pleasure I have felt in the employment will be deeply enhanced by such a reward.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE TREATISE ON THE EUCCHARIST.

THERE are two points adverted to in the preceding observations, respecting which I may be thought to have not sufficiently explained myself.

First, I have expressly intimated a specific difference between the general influences of the Holy Spirit on men's minds and hearts, and those peculiar influences, for the conveyance of which the sacrament of the Eucharist has been specially provided.

For this distinction, I conceive I have the clearest warrant of Holy Scripture. We learn, from both the New and Old Testament, that the influences of the Holy Spirit have been ever attendant on the revealed knowledge of God, with whatever degree of clearness, or fulness, the revelation was made. All true Christians agree, that those influences were always indispensable to the rectifying of man's moral nature; and, under the Jewish dispensation, we find David imploring this heavenly blessing in as strong terms as if he had learned their necessity in the school of Christianity:—"Take not," said he, "thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and stablish me with thy free spirit." And we are as distinctly told, that the Holy Ghost was upon Simeon and Anna, as it is said afterwards, of the

Apostles themselves. And yet it is no less clearly asserted, that, in a certain peculiar and eminent sense, the Holy Ghost was not given until the Lord Jesus Christ was glorified; evidently implying, that, under the Gospel dispensation, the influences of the Divine Spirit would be so much more excellent and effective than any such influences which, till then, had been afforded, as to make those former operations seem to disappear from view, in comparison with the blessings to be conferred in the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah.

That the communication of the Holy Spirit, to which this high distinction is given, did not consist in those miraculous powers with which, at the first, the special grace of the Gospel was so largely accompanied, is evident on many clear grounds. For example: those extraordinary powers were soon found to be but temporary; but the evangelical communication of the Holy Spirit was expressly declared perpetual. "Repent," said St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, to the Jews, who were moved by his discourse, "and be baptised every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off; even as many as the Lord our God shall call." This invaluable assurance was implied, even in the first express notification of such a proposed blessing to the Apostles. "I will pray the Father," says our Lord, "and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." Nor is the comprehensiveness of this promise made

doubtful, by its being addressed personally to the disciples alone, inasmuch as another analogous assurance, which is, in like manner, personally addressed to the Apostles only, must, from its unequivocal extension, be applied to all ages of the Church. "Go," said he, "and disciple all nations, &c.; and lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world." It need scarcely be remarked, that the term "for ever," in the former case, if doubtful in itself, is made indubitable by this latter strictly equivalent, but still more unquestionable, expression.

I forbear to adduce farther proof, that the gift of the Holy Ghost, in its high evangelical meaning, is always to be understood in a moral, and not in a miraculous sense, except by making one remark, which is too important to be omitted,—that the peculiar characters of this gift are inapplicable to even the highest possible miraculous powers. For the evangelic gift of the Holy Ghost is declared by St. Paul, to be the earnest of the everlasting inheritance; whereas, miraculous powers were so far from being such an earnest, that our Lord assures us, he will declare at the last day, to many who had possessed those powers, that he never knew them. We are moreover taught by St. Paul, that where the Holy Ghost has been given, the love of God is "shed abroad in the heart;" while the same Apostle elsewhere intimates, that the highest exercise of miraculous powers may be found where that divine affection is wanting.

What then is, in truth, that special gift of the

Spirit which is represented as the peculiar distinction, as well as supreme blessing, of the Gospel dispensation? I conceive, that if we attentively examine the New Testament, we shall find abundant and concurrent evidence, that the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is there so emphatically dwelt upon, and so eminently designated, has direct and exclusive reference to the co-operative part, which the third person of the blessed Trinity has been pleased to take with the incarnate Word, in the work of man's spiritual redemption. It is, assuredly, far too profound a subject to be fathomed by our scanty intellect; but that which is written, is written for our instruction; and it is, therefore, no less our duty than our interest, to examine with humility and attention, what has been made known to us on this important point in the word of inspiration.

I conceive, that while the whole three persons of the blessed Trinity are uniformly represented, as taking a like gracious interest in the spiritual redemption of man, the actual accomplishment of the design is more directly referred to the distinct, yet concurrent agency, first, of the eternal Word, and secondly, of the co-eternal Spirit. I do not here enter into the inquiry respecting what preliminary measures might have been judged necessary to harmonise God's condescending goodness to man, with the general government of the intelligent universe. This profound subject, I conceive, is rather intimated than clearly revealed in the sacred volume. Of this, however, we are sure, that whatever divine wisdom saw expedient,

was perfectly accomplished; and may we not reasonably think it was so accomplished, as to leave to us no other concern, than to secure to ourselves those benefits and blessings, which have been so graciously and so wonderfully provided for us!

Of those benefits and blessings, the chief one is represented in Holy Scripture to be, the spiritual animation of our souls, by a divinely communicated influence; of which the eternal Word, made flesh, is uniformly set forth as the directly communicative fountain. This mysterious provision for restoring the diseased nature of man, and replenishing it with the moral health and happiness for which it was created, was expressly promulgated by our Lord himself, in his last discourse to his Apostles. Under the semblance of a vine and its branches, he instructed them in the nature of that spiritual union with him, and continual derivation of inward life and strength from him, by which they were to become qualified in this world for everlasting glory in that which was to come. In this last lesson, our Lord resolved into one vitalising principle, all the divine precepts and doctrines which he had delivered throughout his ministry on earth. He thus taught them the source from whence, alone, they were to receive both the essential elements, and the genuine prelibations, of that immortal life, which he was then so wonderfully bringing to light by his Gospel.

That this leading truth was ever after kept in view by the Apostles, and was continually regarded

by them as the very heart-pulse of Christian faith and practice, it would be easy to establish on the authority, not only of numberless passages in the epistolary part of the New Testament, but of the entire doctrinal tenour which harmoniously pervades and combines the whole Christian volume. It is on this account, that our incarnate Saviour is described as the second Adam, who was to be to us the fountain of a spiritual and heavenly nature, as the first Adam has been to us the fountain of an animal and earthly nature; and we are instructed, that, as by the fall of our earthly progenitor, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and thus one man was, to all, the source of corruption and mortality; so by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ, a gift of righteousness is given to all who will receive it, which destroys the reign of sin, and is at once the earnest and the principle of a blessed immortality.

Such is the doctrine of St. Paul, in the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; and in the 6th chapter he proceeds to shew, that, not only is our Lord personally a fountain of grace, but that, in his crucifixion, his death, and his resurrection, he opened, as it were, perennial springs of specific influence, which should ever exercise an assimilating virtue on the minds and hearts which would receive them. This mysterious truth is stated by the Apostle in the strongest terms of which human language is capable: to imbibe those influences, is, as he teaches, to have our old man, or the corrupt nature derived from our first parent, so crucified, that we shall no longer be its servants,

or compelled to obey its motions; and it is to be blessed with such a resurrection of the inner man, from the death of sin to a new life of righteousness, as gives power not only to practise every moral virtue, but also to exercise, by substantial anticipation, the affections of the heavenly state.

There is a depth in this subject which it would require much discourse to explore. But I believe I may confidently assert, that it is the leading subject in the New Testament; and that, in the epistles of St. Paul, particularly, no portion of any length could be found in which it is not recognised or referred to, as the one vital principle by which the whole Christian constitution, in its inward and spiritual import, is sustained and animated. It would be easy to adduce examples in support of this remark, but I believe its truth will be obvious to every intelligent and attentive reader.

It must, however, be particularly observed, that in these divine energies and influences of the incarnate Word, the co-operation of the Holy Spirit is so expressly and uniformly stated to bear a part, as to make this a point of Christian faith ever to be kept in view. We are taught to regard the third person of the Trinity, not merely as the Spirit of God, but also as the Spirit of Christ; and to consider our participation of his influence, as the Spirit of Christ, to be the test of our true Christian character; for St. Paul declares, that “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” He also instructs us, that the filial spirit of Christianity, which constitutes its chief superiority to the dispensation which had preceded,

proceeds from the Spirit of the Son of God being sent into our hearts, and raising our affections and our confidence toward God as our Father.

Thus, then, on the whole, are we taught, that the richest treasures of grace and virtue are provided for us, in the adorable person of our incarnate Saviour; and that, not only in virtue of his union with our nature, but of his being crucified, his dying, and his rising again: and that those treasures are communicated to our minds and hearts by the continued agency of the Holy Spirit, who, as it were, passes from the second Adam into all who aspire to a spiritual union with this ineffable source of a new and heavenly life; and makes them, at once, his own temple, and living members of the great head of the Church; to whom he unites them, in a vital, and (if they faithfully concur) a still advancing, and, at length, beatific incorporation.

That this is a deeply mysterious doctrine, cannot be disputed. But it would seem impossible to read the New Testament with serious and candid attention, without perceiving, that the animating and strengthening influence of God manifest in the flesh, communicated to the inner man through the power of the Holy Ghost, is, in every instance, contemplated as the great blessing of the Gospel, through which, every duty may be performed, every trial sustained, every want endured, and every seduction of earth purely and perfectly surmounted. This is, in truth, the great object to which the most stupendous exercise of miraculous powers was but subservient; and to make provision

for which, the Lord of Glory lived on earth, died and rose again ; and having ascended to heaven, sent another Comforter, to abide with his Church for ever.

In what respect, then, most eminently and supremely, was the Holy Ghost to be the Comforter of the Church ? Not (as has been already intimated) by his miraculous endowments, inasmuch as these were no pledge of personal salvation ; not by revealing things to come, nor even by giving a mouth and wisdom, which adversaries could neither gainsay nor resist : these operations of the Spirit were exerted on the intellectual powers, and had no necessary efficacy on the heart, which alone is the seat of true and solid comfort, as it is, in like manner, the lodging-place of all the worst enemies to our peace.

In what manner, then, can we conceive the Holy Spirit most effectually giving comfort to the heart ? Is it not by his taking possession of it, under what we may venture to call His evangelical character ; that is, as the Spirit of Christ ? Our Lord, in his last discourse, thus declares the high purpose of the divine Spirit's specially promised mission : " He shall glorify me ; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." I scarcely need remark, that the " shewing," of which our Lord speaks, could not mean what was merely speculative ; for, by such shewing, our Lord would not have been glorified. His glory is uniformly made to consist in the manifestation of his moral and spiritual influence. The " shewing," therefore, which our Saviour ascribes to the Holy Ghost, can

be only an inward and spiritual notification of our Saviour's fulness of grace and truth, to the minds and hearts of his followers; an experimental "shewing;" such as to imply the participation and enjoyment of those mysterious blessings, with which our Lord enriches the faithful subjects of his spiritual kingdom.

As this operation, therefore, of the Holy Spirit, is, self-evidently, the noblest, and the most valuable, which can be conceived in this stage of our existence; so to this must we refer all that is said in the New Testament respecting that gift of the Holy Ghost which was to distinguish the Gospel dispensation. Whatever else may be included in that gift, or by whatever sensible demonstrations of Omnipotence it was to be verified or signalised, still we must conclude from the whole tenour of the New Testament, that the essence of that divine gift was spiritual and heavenly; and that it was to consist in the accomplishment, through the Spirit of God, in our inner man, of all that had been purposed and provided for in the incarnation and mysterious ministry of the Son of God. Nothing short of this could truly glorify the Redeemer, or constitute the sealing of "the spirit unto the day of redemption;" and thus only could Christians be so strengthened with might by the Spirit, in the inner man, that Christ should (as it were) dwell in their hearts by faith, and that they should be rooted and grounded in the love of God.

Such, then, being the special and peculiar blessing of the Gospel, it might be inferred on general grounds, if even direct evidence were wanting, that

the peculiar rite of the Gospel must have a special relation and subserviency to that blessing. But the express designation of the holy Eucharist, by our Lord himself, as his own virtual body and blood, and St. Paul's appeal to the received belief of the Church, that the blessed cup was the communion of the blood of Christ, and that the broken bread was the communion of the body of Christ, established beyond question, that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is to serve as the external and visible medium through which the disciples of Christ, in all ages, are to expect, through the co-operation of the Eternal Spirit, the divinely vivifying influences of his incarnate person, and the ineffable virtues of his crucifixion and death. The fact being undeniable, that there are, in the evangelic dispensation, such influences, and such virtues, and those influences and virtues being denominated by our Lord himself, his flesh, and his blood, we are obliged by the terms of St. Paul, and by the still stronger terms (if that be possible) of our Lord himself, to identify the internal grace and virtue of the Eucharist, with those quickening, strengthening, and purifying communications which are promised to Christians, as proceeding from the person and death of Christ, through the ever-co-operative agency of the Holy Ghost.

It can scarcely be doubted by any unprejudiced Christian, that the blessed Spirit has ever, in different measures, been imparting his gracious influences to the minds of men; and that, in every age and nation, it has been his work and his delight to foster every disposition, and to assist

and sustain every honest effort to obey "the law written in the heart." In the patriarchal line, and afterward within the Jewish pale, we may conclude that He exerted an agency of a still more definite kind, specifically adapted, and advancingly proportioned, to the fit introduction of the Gospel dispensation. There is, besides, no just ground for supposing, that, even in these Christian times, there may not be much greater room for the exercise of those influences of the Divine Spirit which are inferior and preparatory, than of those influences which belong to the full establishment of Christ's kingdom in the heart.

The divine influence, for example, which the Catholic Church has always believed to accompany the baptismal washing, where no bar was placed by the moral indisposedness of the subject, must, in infants especially, be regarded as proportioned to an initiatory, and not to a consummating purpose. It would seem, that our Lord's idea of the merchantman, in the beautiful parable of the pearl, can be realised, only where infant-baptism has been followed by a suitable training in his nurture and discipline. But, even then, the commencing pursuit is that of goodly pearls, and not yet, distinctly and definitely, that of the pearl of great price. The less enlightened pursuit is clearly of that which is good; and therefore it is maintained under his influence from whom "every good gift" proceedeth. What, therefore, the Holy Spirit condescends to effect in that first Christian sacrament, must be considered, not as superseding, but as preparing for, those higher and fuller influences

which confer God's most "perfect gift" on earth, and put the mind and heart into actual possession of the "pearl of great price."

Is it not, then, with this highest and fullest communication of divine grace, that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper has been specifically connected by the very words of institution? It could have been no other than that highest and fullest communication of divine grace which our Lord has promised, and so emphatically dwelt upon, in the 6th chapter of St. John. When, therefore, he applies those very terms, which he had declared to be, in the highest degree, significant of spirit and of life, to those sanctified elements which he was pleased to appoint as sacramental symbols; and when he enjoins that very eating and drinking which, in that discourse, he had pronounced indispensable, to be carried into act in a visible manner, but with such profoundly significant import, in this perpetuated institution, what can we conclude, but that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is eminently, and in a way of peculiar appropriation, the visible conduit, through which, by the invisible operation of Him who appointed it, is conveyed that special evangelical grace with which the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have, conjointly, distinguished and blessed the Christian dispensation?

I rest in this conclusion with the greater confidence, inasmuch as it is in this light that the Church of England has regarded the eucharistic institution. It would be hardly possible to convey the notion which I have wished to express, more

strictly, more fully, or more profoundly, than in those words in which our Church describes the benefit of worthily receiving the Lord's Supper. "Then," it says, "we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood; then, we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us."

The first thing remarkable in this passage is, the direct reference which is made to our Lord's words in the 6th of St. John; in the form of an express declaration, that the eating and drinking, there spoken of, are verified in the worthy reception of the eucharistic symbols. So far, therefore, as our Lord in that discourse described the highest and most appropriate benefit and blessing conferred through his incarnation, the sacramental bread and wine are, in the judgment of the Church of England, the vehicles through which that benefit and blessing is conveyed to qualified receivers.

But our Church does not only propound this holy mystery; she proceeds to evince its reality and importance by declaring its results. "Then," she says, "we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us."

It would seem, indeed, that the three members of this sentence stand together in a graduated order. Spiritually to eat the flesh of Christ, and to drink his blood, is the effectual means of blessing; to dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, is the substance of that blessing; and to be one with Christ, and Christ with us, is its consummation and perfection. We are thus materially aided in ascertaining the import of the first position; which

must of necessity have been deemed such, as to warrant the second and third. Let us consider, then, what that eating of Christ's flesh, and drinking of his blood, in and through the eucharistic symbols (with which our Church, strictly following our Lord's words of institution, combines the heavenly blessing), must be, in order to such real and divinely substantial results. Let us weigh the expressions by the strictest rule of verbal appreciation; and shall we find it possible to apply any other than the deepest and most practical meaning to our "dwelling in Christ, and Christ's dwelling in us?" It can amount to nothing less, than that we are made habitual possessors of that supernatural grace with the sufficiency of which St. Paul was comforted under his most afflicting infirmity of animal nature; and the divinity of which evinced itself, by the contrast of the strength which it infused, with the conscious weakness of the receiver.

Nothing less than this, I say, can be implied in those significant words; and if they comprehended nothing more, it would be impossible to reduce the benefit which they describe, to any unsubstantial generality. If we dwell in Christ, we must have some conscious evidence of our high and holy resting-place; and our minds and hearts must rationally and satisfactorily feel, that they are no longer captives to the world, the flesh, or the devil. To dwell in Christ, is to possess an effectual refuge from the strength of every possible temptation, and to have an unfailing resource in every trial, during our earthly pilgrimage, to which our mortal nature remains exposed. If

we dwell in Christ, we no longer live in sin ; we no longer cleave to the world ; we are no longer the helpless victims of earthly vicissitudes ; but amongst the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts are surely there fixed, where true joys are to be found. “ In the world,” said our Lord to his Apostles, “ ye shall have tribulation : but in me ye shall have peace.” To dwell in Christ, therefore, is to enjoy this peace ; the peace of a mind no longer distracted by unruly passions, no longer led astray by foolish and hurtful lusts ; but preserved from inward, as well as outward deviations, by its adherence to its centre of rest and safety ; and kept, as in a fortress, by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.

To have Christ dwelling in us, though necessarily consequent on our dwelling in Him, implies something still more excellent and happy. Our dwelling in Christ includes all that belongs to spiritual liberty and security. It is the perfect verification of what the Psalmist has declared : “ Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” But to have Christ dwelling in us, is to be made spiritually rich, as well as spiritually secure. He dwells in us only so far as he inspires us with the mind and tempers, the virtues and graces, of which He himself is the infinite fountain. “ We saw his glory,” says St. John, “ the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth ; and of his fulness have all we received, even grace for grace ;” each particular grace which was in Him being specifically infused into the

members of his mystical body. It is, then, by the infusion of this fulness, that Christ is said, in the New Testament, to dwell in his faithful disciples. This is that spiritual mystery, the riches of the glory of which, St. Paul was divinely commissioned to make known among the Gentiles; for nothing less than this would verify his sublime definition of it: "which is," says he, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

I am well aware, that I am giving to the language of our Church a far deeper sense than it may have been the common custom to apply to it; but I believe that it is only from want of adequate consideration, that its weighty meaning could have been overlooked. It could not have been the intention of the Church, on any occasion, and least of all in this most solemn ordinance, to use vague or rhetorical expressions. It was doubtless, now eminently, her purpose, to "speak as the oracles of God;" and while she does not hesitate to place before her children the highest and holiest "things, pertaining to the kingdom" of our Lord, she employs terms, which the entire tenour of the New Testament at once sanctions and explains. There is no support or resource which the Gospel holds out to us, which is not included in our dwelling in Christ; there is no height of moral and spiritual excellence, to which it invites our aspiring, which is not comprehended in Christ's dwelling in us. But these blessings and graces, when most real and genuine, still admit of advancement; and that advancement being described by St. Paul, as the "growing up into Him, in all things, which is

the head, even Christ," our Church has terminated its statement of eucharistic blessings, in our being "one with Christ, and Christ with us."

Did these words stand alone, they would, even then, scarcely admit of any other than an inward and spiritual meaning; but, as coming after, and connected with, those which precede them, that sense is indispensable. It must, moreover, be observed, that in these specific declarations of sacramental results, our Church repeats only, in substance, what had been pronounced by our Redeemer. "He," said Christ, "that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him;" and he immediately adds that still stronger and deeper declaration, which clearly suggested, and no less clearly supports, the third position: "We are one with Christ, and Christ with us." For such must be, indeed, our happy condition, when these words are fulfilled in us: "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." To live spiritually by Christ, is, in the most important sense, to be one with him; we must therefore conclude, that in stating our unity with Christ, to be, as it were, the crowning result of a right reception of Christ in the eucharistic ordinance, our Church means, by this scriptural term, to designate, not only the reality, but the maturity of an inward and spiritual life, through that union with him, which he himself has illustrated, by that of the branches of a vine with the main stem, by which they are sustained and nourished.

That it is the maturity of the spiritual life which those last words of the passage are meant to express, appears from this consideration; that nothing more exalted is conceivable than the notion which is here conveyed. It is for some great and glorious purpose, that Christ would bless us with that mysterious intercommunication, which He has described, as our dwelling in him, and his dwelling in us. And no imaginable result of this divine vouchsafement could be either more glorious, or more natural, than our inner man being so imbued with the influences of incarnate Godhead, as to make us, in every movement of heart and life, of the same mind and spirit with our Divine Head. On the other hand, can any thing, short of such an assimilation, realise our being one with him, and his being one with us, as a consequence of our dwelling in him, and his dwelling in us? The self-evident interiority of this antecedent blessing, obliges us to understand the consequent blessing in a like interior sense. And so understood, it presents to us a consummation of the evangelic process, which, doubtless, in itself, admits of still higher and higher degrees of advancement; but beyond which, as to kind and nature, nothing of greater excellence can be conceived.

In fact, there is not a single high attainment of St. Paul himself, except those of a miraculous kind, which is not comprehended, in such union with the Divine Redeemer, as is here made to flow, from right reception of the Eucharist. When that Apostle declares, that he was crucified with Christ, and that it was not he who lived, but Christ who

lived within him; and when he elsewhere says, that, in every thing, and in all things, he was instructed (as his own Greek word, with singular significancy, imports, by an advancement, or initiation, into the inner mysteries of the Gospel,¹) both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer want; in a word, to be able to do all things, through internal strength from his Redeemer;² he evidently does nothing more than exemplify, in instances the most exalted, and yet the most appropriate, his being “one with Christ, and Christ with him.”

In the remarkable passage, therefore, which has been adduced, and particularly in its concluding sentence, our Church not only declares her deep and comprehensive sense of the eucharistical blessing, but she also teaches all her children the high estimate which they are to make of their Christian vocation. She thus instructs them, that there is an invisible Christianity, to which their visible Christianity is merely subservient and instrumental; and that that invisible Christianity is strictly and perfectly what it was in the time of the Apostles, and even in the Apostles themselves; that it is that kingdom of heaven, which our Lord declares to be *within the soul*, and which St. Paul describes as righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is, therefore, inconsistent and vain for any professed disciple of our Church, to plead for a formal, cold,

¹ Ἐν παντί καὶ ἐν πᾶσι μεμύημαι. Phil. iv. 12.

² Πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με Χριστῷ. Phil. iv. 13.

and ineffective Christianity. This single passage confutes, and ought to silence, every such false brother. The verification of this one statement of internal beatitude, would not only raise the soul, infallibly, above the storms and tempests of this lower world, but would imply an anticipation of Paradise, a solid and undelusive commencement of the very heaven of heaven in the mind and heart.

For, be it well observed, that these expressions of our Church, interpreted, as they alone can be, by the numerous passages which correspond to them in the New Testament, will be found to convey no intimation of any thing rapturous or visionary. A warm imagination, and want of wise guidance, have, doubtless, too often betrayed intentionally devout persons into passionate elevations of mind, and supposed unions with their Saviour, in which assurances seemed to be given them of divine favour and everlasting safety; though in a way as unintelligible to all others, as, it may be feared, it was hazardous to themselves. But our Church so raises the Christian ardour of her children, as by their very elevation to ensure their sobriety. The blessings which she places before them, are exclusively of a moral nature. It is in this way, only, that the scriptural expressions, of our dwelling in Christ, and of Christ's dwelling in us, of our being one with Christ, and Christ with us, are used in those divine oracles from whence they are taken. They who examine the New Testament attentively and candidly, must discover that an union with the incarnate Word, in

spirit and temper, in heart and mind, is the glorious result to which all the beams of evangelical light converge, and in which they terminate: and it will equally be seen, in every part of our invaluable formulary, that the Church of England has adhered to this divine guidance. Every aspiration which she excites, every exercise of mind in which she engages us, every depth of feeling which she aims at producing, every height of spiritual beatitude to which she invites and urges us, all is divinely moral. It is a moral faith in Christ, which, in her view, is our only path to safety and happiness; it is a moral love of God, which she deems the essence of our spiritual life; it is a moral maturity, the bringing forth “the fruits of the Spirit,” in which she places its present consummation. The result she thus looks for, the prize which she thus proposes, is, at once, the most sober and the most sublime: so sober, as to leave no room for the slightest mixture of visionary delusion; yet so sublime, as to evince to the mind and heart of the possessor, that the moral powers, the moral affections, and the moral enjoyments, which have grown up within him, are no more the effect of his own mere exertions, than the flowing of his blood is the effect of his continued volition.

While, therefore, the Church of England suggests no subject of solicitude, and proposes no object of pursuit, but such as are essentially moral — (all her divine philosophy being ultimately resolvable into that one brief, but most comprehensive oracle, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for

they shall see God");¹ she no less earnestly teaches, that, from the first to the last step of our Christian course, we can accomplish nothing effectually by our own power, but must obtain both the implantation and the increase of every pure principle, of every right temper, and of every spiritual affection, from the grace of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, infused into us by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

The height of beatific purity and virtue, then, to which, as Christians, we are called to rise, and the influences from above, by which alone we can thus, by anticipation, dwell in God's tabernacle, and rest upon his holy hill, are the two grand points to which all the devotional forms of our Church are directed. Concluding the *matter* of our true happiness to consist in a virtual, but vital commencement of our future heaven, and the indispensable means of that happiness not less to consist in a really divine communication, our Church aims at forming us to such habits and feelings of devotion, as must imply a constant commerce of the heart with heaven, and a gradual approximation to its purity, its serenity, and its happiness, through fresh and fuller infusion of that eternal life, which God has given us in his Son.

¹ Genuine disciples of the Church of England have expressed their strong persuasion, that this beatitude is not confined to heaven. "If," says the excellent Townson, "the pure in heart have a promise, as of a congenial reward, that they shall hereafter see God, we may believe, that, in such measure as their hearts are pure, they will have a capacity for some anticipation of this blessed vision here on earth." The sublimity of this thought is equalled only by its sobriety.

Such, I say, is the uniform import and design of all our established services. Their object is to raise us to every thing for which we were created, which can make us well pleasing to God, acceptable to men, and happy in ourselves ; substantially happy, even while in the body ; with the assurance of unalloyed and consummate happiness hereafter. And for this exalted purpose, while every possible degree of fidelity and vigilance is to be exercised on our part, we are continually taught to look upward, and expect all increase of wisdom, fortitude, or virtue, from the boundless provision made for us in the mystery of redemption. Of this mystery, then, the Church considers the sacrament of the Eucharist, not only to be expressly and profoundly significant, but to constitute, in some sort, an instrumental organ. That grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which alone we can live, much more grow up and advance as Christians, is, according to our Church, eminently and peculiarly conveyed to us, in and through this visible ordinance. As it is that special and appropriate grace of the Gospel, which she always has in view, that grace, which raises every living member of Christ's kingdom above even Christ's distinguished forerunner ; so is it this crowning blessing of the Gospel, this concentration of all its lights, and verification of its most precious promises, which she unites, indissolubly, with the right reception of the eucharistic symbols ; “ for then,” says she, “ we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood ; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us ; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us.”

That our Church is supported by Holy Scripture, in this high estimate of the Eucharist, has already, I trust, been sufficiently shewn ; nor need I again remark, that if nothing else but the appeal of St. Paul to the universal belief of the Christian church, could be added to our Lord's words, in the 6th chapter of St. John, an indisputable ground would be established for the view which our Church has thus solemnly, yet most simply, placed before us.

It may be right, however, to observe, that the fulness of blessing, which, in those comprehensive words, we are encouraged to expect, cannot be understood as the result of a single reception of the Eucharist, be the disposition of the receiver ever so sincere and upright. It is, indeed, to be believed, that, in every such instance, " we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood ;" that is, we receive in this ordinance a measure, less or more, according to the divine adjustments, of that ineffable influence which it is appointed to convey. But the expressions of our dwelling in Christ, and Christ dwelling in us ; still more, of our being one with Christ, and Christ with us, are evidently not an amplification of what is in the first sentence, but are descriptive of its invaluable results ; and that, too, as I have endeavoured to shew, in terms so significant of advancement and consummation, as to comprehend the utmost heights of virtue and happiness, which a Christian can reach on this side of heaven. Besides, it is obvious, that, while the first of the three positions states a specific and definite act of the qualified communicant, including

in it an equally definite, though, by us, inconceivable operation of divine goodness and power, the second and third positions no less clearly convey the idea of habitual and settled attainments; and such attainments, as must, severally, within themselves, imply different degrees of completeness and confirmation. It is true the Church does not stop, on that solemn occasion, to explain her sense of the scriptural language which she employs. Had she done so, she would inevitably have weakened its force, and, consequently, lessened its impressiveness. She left her meaning to be found in the tenour of those passages of the New Testament from which she derived the terms in which she speaks; and to be deduced from the very nature of the institution; I mean, from its being a rite not to be administered once only, like baptism, to each individual Christian, but, on the contrary, to be recurred to repeatedly, and continually, to the close of our pilgrimage on earth. This feature in the Eucharist, declares it to be intended for continued and increasing benefit; I say, increasing benefit, both because each right reception must add something to the character of the receiver, and, also, because that general rule must hold good in this particular instance: "Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance." In order, therefore, to do adequate justice to the obvious purpose of this sacred ordinance, it was necessary to declare, not only its commencing, but its progressive, and, at length, consummate conduciveness to our spiritual redemption. This our Church has accordingly attended to; and in the

fewest, but most deeply weighed, and exquisitely applied words, she at once teaches the depth of blessing which has been, as it were, deposited for us in the sacred Eucharist, and the height of spiritual advancement and Christian maturity to which we may arrive by rightly availing ourselves of that wonderfully gracious provision. In a word, it is here placed in its justest light, and manifested in its full extent ; so as to appear a true and perfect antitype of that mysterious ladder, which Jacob saw in his vision at Bethel, whose foot indeed was on the earth, but whose top reached to heaven.

I have thus endeavoured to explain the peculiar influences of divine grace which distinguish the Christian dispensation ; and of which the Christian ordinance of the Eucharist appears designed, by its divine Author, to be the chief instrumental conduit. If, in this attempt, I have particularly dwelt on the view of this important subject which is given by the Church of England, it is because I was convinced I could in no other way so fully elucidate the doctrine of Holy Scripture, and the established sense of the ancient Catholic Church.

Another point, which may possibly need further explanation, is, the peculiar comfort and confidence which I have supposed to arise from the thought, that, in the sacred Eucharist, we do not concur, as workers together with God ; but expect the blessing, directly and exclusively, from his own Almighty power.

This distinction of the Eucharist from all other means of grace (except the initiatory sacrament of baptism), I have already shewn to follow as a

necessary result, from the actual instrumentality of the sacramental symbols. This mysterious fact being once allowed, we forthwith conceive the notion of a strictly divine and supernatural operation; inasmuch as nothing but the divine power itself could convey spiritual virtue through such intrinsically weak instruments. We are thus led to feel, that the unseen agency is not only truly, but unmixedly divine; and that, by consequence, it works its purpose, not on a co-operative, but on a passive subject: I do not mean passive as to desire, or as to sincere endeavours to expel whatever might disqualify for so sacred a vouchsafement, but passive in the actual matter of reception; in like manner as the Apostles were passive, when our Saviour breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

I cannot but think, then, that, in the assured prospect of a divine influence so directly and simply from God himself, there is matter of consolation, and motive for confidence, beyond what it would be reasonable to feel in any other act or exercise of devotion. Where we ourselves are to use exertion, in order to attain an end, we may very honestly endeavour to look beyond, and above, our own working, to the source of every good, as well as of every perfect gift. But those efforts will, probably, be much more sincere than successful; and the conscious weakness or languor of the meditating, or supplicating mind, will, in spite of every endeavour to the contrary, proportionally lessen the sense of benefit, and even the hope of a divine blessing. It is impossible to avoid this way

of reckoning, in any act which is, in its nature, contributory to the wished-for purpose; and notwithstanding we expect the blessing to come from Him, "in whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning," we cannot but apprehend, that the mental clouds and vapours, which we are unable to dispel, as well as the imperfect husbandry, which we feel we are exercising, may defraud us of our promised share in the quickening and maturing beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

Such occasional hinderances to devotional comfort, are not wholly to be surmounted by the deepest sincerity, nor even by a considerable growth in grace. It is enough for the disciple to be as his master; and if even the pure and holy mind of our Redeemer was so depressed by a preternatural disturbance of his animal frame, that it was necessary for an angel from heaven to afford him a proportioned supernatural assistance, it cannot be expected but that, even in the most advanced state of the Christian life, the mind should sometimes feel its own co-operation with God to be so feeble and inadequate, as to inspire an anxious wish that He would be pleased to infuse grace and strength into it, independently of its own exertions; and, directly and simply, work in it, of his own good pleasure, both to will and to do.

To this natural and inextinguishable appetite of the devout mind, nothing could more strictly or more perfectly correspond, than the institution of the Eucharist, as designated by our Redeemer, and explained by his Apostle. To that Apostle, in an hour of deep anxiety, on account of some oppres-

sive infirmity in his animal frame, his divine Master gave this appropriate consolation, “ My grace is sufficient for thee ; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” A more cheering or animating assurance could not have been given, than that contained in these words ; and especially in the latter clause of the sentence, which, I conceive, contains in it that very notion of divine aid and blessing, which is so peculiarly needed to help our infirmity, and is so signally provided for, in a sacred ordinance, wherein, as I have endeavoured to shew, the nature of the means evinces the direct and exclusive agency of Omnipotence.

It was, specifically, the grace of Christ, which was to prove sufficient for St. Paul ; it was his strength, the strength of God manifest in the flesh, which was to be made perfect in the Apostle’s weakness. In how many various ways this promise was to be fulfilled, it is not for us to pronounce ; but when the same blessed Apostle spoke, fourteen years after, of the communion of Christ’s blood, and the communion of Christ’s body, can we doubt that, in these significant terms, he essentially included, or rather, in the strongest manner possible, denoted, that very communication of grace and strength from our Saviour, in which he himself had found such adequate support ; and which, instead of being counteracted, was made more glorious, by the weakness of the receiver ? What else than this could be meant, by the communion of Christ’s blood, and the communion of Christ’s body ? Surely, in such a communication of grace and strength, the divine words, “ He that eateth

me, even he shall live by me," would have their clear and perfect fulfilment: and it was no less evident, that in the sacred institution which was to give effect to those words, the divine strength signally accommodated itself to human weakness. As I have just observed, the gracious assurance given to St. Paul, and, through him, to all faithful Christians, might be verified in various other ways, as exigencies should require. But the sacrament of the Lord's Supper bore the special mark and signature of this very end and purpose. Its nature and character was such as to imply, that, in this means of grace, the good which was done, God would do it himself; and, by consequence, the co-operation of mind on the part of the receiver, which, in all the common means of edification, must be deemed indispensable, was, in the Eucharist, peculiarly and mysteriously superseded; and *capacity* the sole requisite for reception of the heavenly blessing.

Need I then say more to shew, how eminently and impressively, in this wonderful provision, the strength of Christ is made perfect in weakness; and how appositely the weakness of the instrumental medium is fitted to console and satisfy the deepest and most depressing sense of weakness in the receiver? Does not the very aspect of such an ordinance, significant as it is of so gracious a purpose, and presenting so express a pledge of that purpose being accomplished, convey stronger and more direct consolation to the drooping spirit, than could be administered in any forms of speech? And, in its stated and continually recurring cele-

bration,¹ are we not instructed that it is chiefly, and peculiarly, by the pure and undiluted grace of Christ, thus from time to time communicated to us through his own direct operation, we are to live and grow as Christians; to receive supplies of divine strength, notwithstanding all our oppressing infirmities; and, if we honestly and assiduously improve the heavenly gift thus assured to us, to attain, at length, to the fulness of the Christian character, and to complete fitness for the inheritance of the saints in light?

But let it not be supposed, that in excluding all strict and proper co-operation of the communicant, in his reception of the eucharistic blessing, I wish to lessen the importance, or question the necessity, of due predisposition, in order to that reception. While the nature of the blessing evinces, not only the divine source from which it comes and the divine agency by which it is bestowed, but also its complete distinctness from all concurrent agency, except that which is outwardly ministerial, it no less implies a capacity of reception in him on whom it is conferred. It is a spiritual blessing; and, therefore, not communicable to an oppositely disposed mind. We cannot co-operate in the divine act, because it is so purely divine as to exclude even subordinate co-agency; but we may obstruct, or wholly resist its effect, by a positive unpreparedness for any such benefit. It is as true as it is consolatory,

¹ The Eucharist, at the first, was celebrated every Lord's Day; and the fitness of this practice is still recognised, in various instances and manners, in the Latin, Greek, and Anglican churches.

that our involuntary defects can be no obstacle to the divine Omnipotence; but, where the grace of God is in no degree desired, and, still more, where there is an actual aversion to it, a communication of that peculiar grace which the Eucharist is intended to convey, would be inconceivable, if not morally impossible.

There must, evidently, be a spiritual appetite, in order to the apprehension, much more the reception, of a spiritual blessing. "Blessed are they," said our Saviour, "who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Their blessedness consists, we see, in their desire being satisfied: they could not be blessed, therefore, if that desire were wanting. This rule holds good, eminently, respecting the Lord's Supper. It is the most distinguished conduit of that heavenly grace, whereby the kingdom of God is established, advanced, and completed, in the mind and heart. But where no desire for this divine grace has been awakened, and no apprehension of its value and necessity is entertained, the provision made by our Redeemer for its conveyance can excite neither rational interest nor adequate reverence.

I precisely mean, however, where there is no such desire, and no such apprehension; because it is certain, that, under deep obscurity of mental vision, there may be sincere aspirations of the inner man, the nature of which may be very indistinctly understood by the mind which forms them. In all such instances, therefore,—as there is safety in approaching, so we cannot doubt that there will be benefit in receiving, the eucharistic symbols.

He who sincerely desires to serve God and to be possessed of Christian virtues, and who goes to the table of our Lord with a wish that he may thereby become more religious and more virtuous, however dark his apprehension of the high and holy mystery which the sacrament of the Eucharist implies and exhibits, will not, we may well believe, go in vain to that ordinance, for this very reason, because the blessing which it instrumentally communicates, is so exclusively divine. Let there be only a capacity of receiving, and a desire, whether explicit or constructive, to receive influence from above, and, on the ground of a strictly divine operation, there is the most cheering certainty, that no sincere and upright individual will go empty away.

Thus, what was said of the type is no less true of the antitype, that he who gathered much, had nothing over, and he who gathered little, had no lack. As the bodily weakness of an Israelite, by this merciful supervention of divine power, even in the act of gathering, did not prevent his carrying away the portion of food convenient for him ; so, much more, where the very act of gathering is superseded by the unmixed fulness of divine operation, may a like result be confidently expected.

From this view, therefore, of the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, we not only derive an encouragement with respect to ourselves, which, even in our most advanced state in this world, may not be unnecessary, but we also learn to look with increased satisfaction on that occasional concourse of communicants, which is excited by the recurrence of our great Christian festivals. Reason unites with

charity in assuring us, that a sincere religious intention actuates at least a great number of those who approach the Christian altar at those solemn seasons; and it is only on the plainest grounds that we can place a limit to this kindly calculation. May we not, then, humbly believe, that in proportion as there is an opening for it, the divine influence, dispensed through that bread and that cup, enters into many an heart which is speculatively unconscious of the blessing it is receiving, and inspires it with holy desires, good counsels, and just works? The benefits thus conferred may as much escape human observation as the reserved seven thousand in Israel had escaped the observation of the prophet Elijah. But we may well be confident, that when the divine benignity has reserved to itself, in the Christian dispensation, a medium of benediction, simply and exclusively its own, the effect is as much beyond *man's* narrow reckoning, as God's ways are higher than man's ways, and his thoughts than man's thoughts.

Were no spiritual good done, in Christian communities, but through human agency, the eternal interests of individuals would be poorly provided for, both as to the nature and extent of the benefits communicated; and it will accordingly be found, that, in proportion as human instruments are looked up to and trusted in, the best results are, in their character, mixed and superficial. The depths of the heart do not seem to be reached; the mind too often appears to support itself by theoretical consolations; and the frailties of animal and corrupted nature are combated and restrained,

rather than conquered and expelled. But whenever God himself is directly and immediately resorted to, the effects, though it may be less perceptible by the eye of man, are of a deeper and more inward character, and imply much more of an entire transmutation. It is not a professional, but a radical religion, which is thus produced. There is, in such instances, no thought of profession, because it is a concern which lies wholly between the heart and its God.

To such a process, then, the provision of sacramental grace appears to be exquisitely adapted. It affords to the secret and unprofessing disciple, that immediate commerce with his God and Saviour which his heart desires, in the simplest and sublimest way ; and while it makes him independent of those human aids which rise and fall and fluctuate with circumstances, it teaches him a dependence on the unseen source of his spiritual life and strength, which is as humble as it is stable. Both himself and his fellow-creatures appear to him as nothing, where God is so signally, and so graciously, all in all.

ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

Finished Christmas Morning, Dec. 1815.

MY DEAR LADY —,

I AM anxious to write to you : I have been so engaged, as to be unable to command either time or thought ; but I am now again at liberty, and I gladly avail myself of it, to say something to you, be the same more or less.

I think I never said any thing to you, particularly, on the subject of divine providence ; and yet, excepting divine grace, there is no sublimer matter of inquiry. By divine grace, God influences our minds and hearts. By divine providence, he disposes and arranges all our circumstances, as inhabitants of this world ; regulating every thing, great or minute, by which our feelings or habits can be affected, in the way which he sees will be conducive to the greatest good here and hereafter.

Some have distinguished between a general, and a particular providence. But, I conceive, what is usually called general providence, is quite another thing. It is nothing more than that which it might be allowable to call the clockwork of nature ; in other words, that assemblage of seemingly mechanical movements, by which provision is made for sustaining the system of this world, and the varieties of animal life.

Providence, in its true sense, is the actual

superintendence of the *omnipresent* and *omnipotent* God. It is the direct exercise of infinite wisdom and illimitable power ; first, for the gradual accomplishment of all God's great designs, respecting society at large ; secondly, for securing and preparing for that purpose all necessary instrumentality, whether individual or collective ; and, thirdly, for adjusting the whole tissue of life, and making all things work together for good, to those who place themselves within, what we might call, the inner circle of providence, by assiduity in prayer, and devotedness of heart and conduct.

It is in this last view, that the consideration of providence is at once universally interesting, and universally obligatory. Attention to what God is doing in the world at large, is one of the noblest and most delightful habits that the mind of man can acquire ; and where there are powers and leisure for this examination, the neglect of it is inexcusable. But the actings of Providence for individual good, are the indispensable concern of all. None are overlooked in this gracious superintendence, whose wish to partake of it is earnest and cordial. Of course, all are bound to attend to that of which every one participates. Doubtless even in this narrowest observation of providence, the sensible and well-disciplined mind will have greatly the advantage ; but it is a comfortable fact, that every mind capable of devotion, in proportion to its actual piety, becomes qualified for this wise and happy exercise of its thinking powers.

The idea which I have thrown out of an in-

terior circle of providence, embracing those who take pains to make God their friend, appears to be supported by the entire tenour of Holy Scripture. It is not said that all things work together for the good of all, but specially for good to those who love God. The angels are ministering spirits to those who shall be heirs of salvation. The Angel of the Lord encampeth around them who fear him; and ten righteous persons would have saved Sodom, out of which the single righteous man was miraculously delivered. To quote proofs of this discriminating care, would be to transcribe the whole sacred history. I will, therefore, only add, that the strongest expressions ever used on the subject, are those of our Lord, respecting the sparrows and the hairs of the head; and nothing can be clearer than the strict applicability of this divine declaration to those, and those only, who were then, or should be afterwards, sincere followers of the blessed Redeemer.

I do not mean to intimate that persons of a different description derive no advantage from God's providential administration. It is, on the contrary, certain, that this benefit is signally extended to those who are yet incapable of possessing moral qualities; that is, to little children. This fact is put past doubt by our Lord himself. It is reasonable to think, that the care exercised over the child does not wholly cease, until the case becomes desperate; and who can calculate in how many cases God sees ground for continuing his gracious attention, where short-sighted man abandons hope? Numberless special instances

may arise, from the prayers of pious parents ; and, on the whole, nothing can be more just or more beautiful, than the saying of the woman of Tekoah to David, that, though God doth not “ respect any person, yet doth he devise means that his banished be not expelled from him.”

To assert, therefore, a peculiar providence, is not to maintain an exclusive providence. God’s goodness is unbounded ; and it is delightful to think in how many ways it may be exercised, beyond our power of conception. But, in seeking instruction or comfort for ourselves, we must attend to what God has expressly promised ; and, in the promises of the Holy Scriptures respecting providential care, I conceive we shall find, that the more excellent the thing promised, the more exact is the definition of those to whom the blessing belongs.

An humble mind might possibly, at first view, be discouraged by this statement. “ Who am I,” it might say, “ to admit the hope of being amongst the objects of such distinguishing regard ? General blessings might be reckoned upon ; but to have place in an interior circle of providence, sounds so like presumption, that I fear to entertain the thought.”

The truth, however, is, that no other view of providence could give the same satisfaction to the thinking, or the same encouragement to the humble. Providence, to meet our simplest idea, must be supposed to adapt its actings to the circumstances of those for whom it acts. Were this property wanting, the name of providence would

not be applicable. The circumstances, then, to be taken into account, are evidently of two kinds,—wants to be relieved, and capacities of relief. We ourselves continually meet cases of extreme want, which yet we cannot relieve, because the suffering individuals could not avail themselves of the natural remedy. This, for example, is the case of those who have neither means of support, nor habits of industry. Thus, in the great economy of Providence, what effectual good can we suppose communicable to those who are obstinately regardless of that benefit to which all other benefits are subservient? As I already observed, foreseen amendment, or better dispositions at bottom, perceived by Him who sees all things; or prayers of parents, or other special causes, may make an essential difference; but, in the general course of things, we might almost dare to ask, what can even Providence do, at least without infringing natural order, for those who will do nothing for themselves? Is it then unreasonable to suppose, that, with the exceptions stated, they who obstinately disregard God, and prefer living as brutes to living as men, can be subjects for Providence to act upon, in little if any other respect, than with reference to collective good? To this object, we cannot question that not only wicked men, but the unseen “rulers of the darkness of this world,” are daily and hourly making unconscious contributions; Divine Wisdom overruling all the movements of both, to the promotion of the ends aimed at by infinite benignity.

As this view, then, is most rational, so is it

most encouraging; for, what can better excite confidence, than the assurance that the moment we turn toward God, we come within the sphere of His special guidance and protection? As incapacity alone excludes from this blessing, the frame of heart which makes us capable, ensures our participation. The humblest spirit which looks up to God, with deepest apprehensions of not being heard because it deems itself the unworthiest of beings, has as sure ground for relying on the divine care as the highest archangel. "God is love," says the Apostle who lay in our Saviour's bosom. Being, then, essential love, He meets the returning prodigal by an adorable necessity of nature; and, from henceforth, the happy individual, however before alienated through incapacity, becomes, as long as he retains the same honest disposition, an object of that attention and care to which no limit can be placed, because exercised by Him whose knowledge and power are as infinite as his goodness.

Thus far, I seem to myself to be treading on the firmest ground. The limit I have drawn around the sphere of special providence, seems marked out, equally, by reason and Holy Scripture; and every promise of the one, and intimation of the other, unite in evincing the certainty, exactness, and universality of that superintendence, in which all the inmates of that interior sphere participate. How true, then, is that declaration of St. Paul, that godliness is profitable for all things, having promise both of the life that now is, and of that which is to come! In this view, the lowest servant of God

possesses an inheritance, even in the present world, infinitely richer, as well as more secure, than that of “mightiest monarchies.” Our own times have witnessed the frailty of tenure, by which these last are held; while, with what unimpeachable truth does the son of Sirach say, “Look at the generations of old, and see, did ever any trust in the Lord, and was confounded? or, did any abide in his fear, and was forsaken? or, whom did he ever despise, that called upon him?”

Nothing, therefore, could be more erroneous, than for those who fear God, to suppose themselves as liable as ever to “the changes and chances of this mortal life.” Change, if God see good, they may experience; but the sincerely religious have done with chance. Having once cordially committed themselves to God’s paternal care, they can meet nothing in their course, which is not the result of Divine adjustment,—of wisdom, which cannot err,—of love, to which the tenderness of the tenderest parent bears no comparison. This is no doubtful speculation: it is included in that one word, GOD. If our minds were but competent adequately to expand this one idea, we should need nothing further, except consciousness of our own honest purpose, to set us at ease, for time as well as eternity. But the sacred volume contains this expansion. In every part, but, above all, in the four Gospels, it unfolds Deity. It shews us Him, who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, condescending to provide for the minutest of our wants; directing, guarding, and assisting us, each hour and moment, with an

infinitely more vigilant and exquisite care, than our own utmost self-love can ever attain to.

We certainly see nothing like this in the general course of society ; and, perhaps, this is one principal reason why many, who seem to be influenced by Divine grace, are comparatively little impressed with Divine providence. They look for operations of grace within ; but they think, with some shadow of plausibility, that providence implies external results ; whereas nothing is seen to meet the eye of an observer, which is not resolvable into human agency, or into that which is called contingency. It is true, that no sincerely religious person *uses* this language ; but I doubt if it is not often the lurking suspicion of their minds : and to be habitually superior to such suggestions, is the privilege, not of the merely sincere, but of the wise and confirmed Christian.

It appears, however, from the above observations, that the world at large is not the stage whereon to look for the actings of Providence. The enlightened mind may, from time to time, discover, in that chaos, the movements which are tending to general amelioration ; and, possibly, the more this great subject is studied, the reference of passing transactions to a blessed and glorious issue will become clearer and more extended. But the providence with which it is necessary to be acquainted, in order to personal comfort, must be sought in another quarter. If special superintendence can be expected only where it is implored ; if culture can be applied only where there is capacity, and guidance exercised where

there is willingness to yield to it; then (however difficult the discrimination), in those only who fear God, and keep his commandments, can we expect to find satisfactory tokens of that providence, on which Holy Scripture invites us to place reliance.

But, as I have just hinted, the finding genuine specimens is a matter of extreme difficulty. We can proceed but a little way in estimating living characters; and that little, doubtfully. In fact, they must not only have goodness, but wisdom; and must, also, be ready to repose unlimited confidence, to make any communication on this subject satisfactory, or even interesting. But it is further to be observed, that even the sincerely good are not always fair examples of providential distinction; because, to be sincere, is not always to be consistent. There is a double-mindedness, which cleaves even to those who mean to be upright; a halting, in some respect or other, perhaps unconsciously, between God and the world, — between things invisible and things earthly. Such cannot exemplify special providence, when they are continually straying out of the interior circle. Not distinguishing themselves from the world, in spirit and conduct, to that degree, which their “high calling” requires, they cannot justly reckon on being distinguished from the world, in the movements of Providence; nay, even their safety may require, that the distinction allotted them, should be that of peculiar liability to suffering. As St. Paul intimates to the disorderly Corinthians (classing himself with them, to abate the severity); “When we are judged, we are

chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

Still, however, extraordinary instances sometimes present themselves, in which it is almost impossible not to recognise, at once, the marks of providential designation. (I speak not of what the world sees in them: I refer to those, only, who are capable of discerning moral qualities, and appreciating moral effects.) I confess, for my own part, I seem to myself to see much of this nature, in Col. Gardiner, in Doctor Doddridge, in the two Wesleys, in Whitefield, and even in others of less celebrity, such as John Newton, and the poet Cowper. I grant, in the last I have named there was something awfully obscure; but, through that obscurity, such rays of providential light dart forth, as to make the special designation not less clear, than the singular sufferings were mysterious. But, in adverting to this class, generally, I think I perceive astonishing evidences of an unseen hand, training each for his work, leading him into his department, and making him serve the destined purpose. I conceive, at the same time, that these are examples of what Providence *can* do, much rather than of what it *will* do. In fact, such are not private individuals: they belong to the second sphere of Providence which I stated; namely, that of apt instruments for general benefit. Still, they deserve our closest observation, as evincing, in various ways, the most palpable, and sometimes the most circumstantial, operations of Providence; and, though more private persons have no right to expect, that their common life will be marked by

equally uncommon interpositions, they see, nevertheless, in those instances, the exactness, as well as certainty, of the superintendence under which they themselves live; and which, if they be faithful to their vocation, will be as vigilant and as effectual for them, in a less apparent way. If the care be exercised, it is of no moment whether it be open or secret: the benefit conferred will be the same; or, rather, I cannot doubt, that, for our spiritual advantage, the secret method is far preferable; as it corresponds better with that life of faith, which is our destined path to perfection. Besides, when it is proved, in any instance, that such an exact superintendence exists, then the goodness and impartiality of God assure us of our full share in it, if only we be not wanting to our heavenly calling.

As if to remove all doubt on this head, it has pleased Divine wisdom, that numerous cases of private Christians should be recorded, in which, sometimes, the marked interference, and, frequently, the obvious guidance, of Providence, is so manifested, as to leave no rational doubt of what is invisibly transacted; and to afford the happiest comment on those promises of Divine support and patronage, which are made, unreservedly, to the faithful servants of God. These promises we are thus additionally warranted (additionally, I mean, to the assurance which they themselves give us), to regard as our infallible pledge of substantial safety, sure support, and eventual felicity. It is perhaps requisite, in order fully to feel this satisfaction, that we should keep

the special point of providential care in view, when we read the lives of good persons. We overlook that which we are not in search of; while, at the first glance, we see that for which we are solicitous. I acknowledge, that, in this inquiry, there is peculiar need of exercising sound judgment, lest we should form conclusions on insufficient grounds; but, on the other hand, we are to give no hearing to that Sadducean spirit, which would represent God as sitting on the circle of the heaven and not regarding what is done, either in heaven or earth. Nothing is, in itself, more reasonable, than that Divine Goodness should be attentive to those who reject all other reliance: marks of such attention are, therefore, to be expected; and, when satisfactorily found, we may say of them, what Nicole says of remarkable operations of Divine grace upon the mind: "*J'estime beaucoup ces sortes d'histoire, quand elles viennent par le canal d'un homme sincère et intelligent, et qui ne fait pas une vertu d'une crédulité indiscrète. Il me semble que ce sont des nouvelles de l'autre monde, qui servent à détacher de celui-ci.*"¹ Even these last words are applicable to our point; for every clear movement of Providence is a fresh notification of the invisible world, and a new engagement upon us to "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."

¹ I value very highly histories of this kind, when they are communicated by a man of sincerity and intelligence, and who does not make a virtue of ill-judged credulity. They appear to me like tidings from the other world, which serve to detach us from the present.

After all, the fountain-head of our information on this subject must be found in the Sacred Scriptures. We have, here, the principles of Divine providence laid down, its purposes declared, its movements infallibly exemplified. It would be unsafe to rely on any supposed instance of providential interference, which did not accord with this primary standard; and it is by clear, deep, and particular acquaintance with this archetype, that we shall be qualified to estimate what we find recorded respecting others, or what we experience in the course of our own life.

To study the Scripture with this special view, I consider one of the most interesting, as well as useful employments in which our minds can be engaged. The principles on which Divine Providence acts, present themselves throughout both Testaments. The promises in both are so full, so definite, and so comprehensive of all times, all circumstances, and all persons who are not self-excluded, as to bring substantial consolation home to every upright bosom. But, perhaps, the most delightful view of all, is that afforded by the exemplifications. In these we find, what cannot be too closely examined, too often recurred to, or too confidently relied on. In this vast field, I must touch but one or two points. It strikes me, then, as peculiarly worth observation, that often in the most momentous instances of Scripture History the event turns on occurrences of the most simple and common kind. We see such movements only as happen in daily life; and yet these seeming contingencies prove, at length, to have been the

first lineaments of designs, commensurate with time, and extending their results through eternity.

For example, when Jacob sent his son Joseph to inquire after his brethren who had gone to feed their father's flocks in Shechem; or when, in the meantime, they were removing from Shechem to Dothan; who could have thought that these little transactions were to lead to any important issue? Yet, *hence* arose Joseph's greatness, the relief of his family, and their sojourning in Egypt. Had Joseph not been sent, or had his brethren not been in the exact line of the Midianitish merchantmen, the same events, I think we may venture to say, could not have ensued. Thus, these apparently trivial incidents form as real links in the chain of Israelitish history as the most remarkable miracles.

When St. Peter and St. John were sent to prepare for our Lord's last Supper, how far was it from the thoughts of the man bearing the pitcher of water, that he was serving a purpose in the most stupendous transaction of which this earth ever was the scene! There was no felt impulse; the man, to his own simple apprehension, was doing what he did daily; and yet, in the direction of his steps on that particular occasion, there was as real Divine agency, as in multiplying the loaves, or in changing the water into wine.

These examples are sufficient to evince, with what condescension and familiarity Divine Goodness takes cognisance of human circumstances; and how, without seeming to interfere, He can make that, which we should deem the most casual occurrence, conducive to the most im-

portant consequences. From such a method of acting, then, what may we not hope? Under such a management, what can we rationally fear? Let us, through Divine Grace, only keep within the circle where these movements are carried on, and we need not doubt, that, though we see nothing remarkable in our course, an unseen hand is directing every circumstance, so as, in the most effectual manner, to avert what might hurt us, to ensure what will benefit us, and to direct all our concerns to the best possible issue.

When I say, "though we see nothing remarkable," I mean to speak strictly of that, to which these latter observations apply, namely, the means by which Providence works; for I think it morally certain, that we shall perceive the results: it may be, not immediately. The words of our Saviour to St. Peter, "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," may, sometimes, apply to our case, as truly as to his. But, often, these mysterious arrangements become, if not distinctly, yet satisfactorily, intelligible. If the dark allotment is not actually cleared up, other dispensations of Providence are so obvious, and so consolatory, as to leave no trace of doubt respecting the design of that which was obscure; and, on the whole, I cannot but believe, that the thoroughly devout mind enjoys, as it travels onward, accumulated evidence of providential superintendence. I am certain that this is felt in proportion to the intensity and steadiness with which we have daily recourse to God, and to the simplicity and fidelity with which we follow his guidance.

If our heart be upright, but our habit of devotion somewhat relaxed, a painful occurrence may be permitted, to brace our mind. I think I have often perceived this in myself; and I have sometimes thought, that there may be occasional torpor of the animal frame, without actual sin, from which we could not easily emerge, if we were not roused by some stimulus. I often think of these words, “and, being in agony, he prayed more earnestly;” and I conclude, that, if our REDEEMER’S devotion admitted of being thus heightened in intensity, how wise and gracious may it be, from time to time, to counteract our frailty, and to dispel our mental drowsiness, by excitements of something of the same nature, but incomparably more gentle.

Still, however, I am inclined to believe, that the peaceful and luminous path is that in which Providence delights most to lead its faithful votaries; and that we may hope, with humility, as well for such comfort as may consist with our true interests here, as for the consummation of bliss hereafter. I humbly conceive that God is willing to be made a friend by us; that he likes we should resort to him continually, in every step of life, and about every thing, respecting which it is reasonable for us to be solicitous. I almost dare to think, that, if we do this of ourselves, he will encourage us in such a course, rather than do that which would seem like forcing us to it. I presume we shall not be forced, if we do not need it; but, on the contrary, drawn into closer confidence.

How deeply gracious is that saying, “Your

Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things ;” consequently, we shall not be deprived of them, nor they be withheld from us, if there be not some necessity ; and how such necessity may be avoided, we are told in those most comfortable words, “ Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things (whatever is requisite to make our passage through life tranquil and substantially happy) shall be added unto you.” There may be mysterious reasons for exceptions ; but this, clearly, is the general rule.

I have reached my prescribed boundary : I must only add, read attentively Isaiah, xxviii. 23d and following verses ; and observe how God elucidates, by the skill he has given the husbandman, the gracious wisdom of his own proceedings.

Ever yours,

ALEXANDER KNOX.

ON THE MEDIATORY CHARACTER OF CHRIST,
AS SUBSISTING IN OUR LORD'S MANHOOD
AND FLESH.

MY DEAR LADY ———,

SINCE I had the pleasure of seeing you, I have more than once felt a fear, lest some of my sentiments might have been misapprehended, even by your honest and friendly mind ; I mean in what I said relative to some parts of Mr. ——'s sermon. Should, therefore, your thoughts at any time recur to that part of my conversation, I wish you to keep one point in your view ; that, when I spoke of prayer, I considered it, strictly, as the approach of the heart, not to any one person of the blessed Trinity, as distinguished from the other two persons, but, comprehensively, to the triune God,—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You will observe, then, that I presume not to censure any view of the mediation of our Redeemer which has no tendency to disturb the united flow of this truest evangelical devotion. I am well aware that different associations of ideas are formed in different minds ; and that notions of things, in their nature not essential, but subsidiary, which appear incorrect to another, may not only be harmless, but helpful, to the mind which has conceived them. The hearer can apprehend only the abstract notion ; he cannot perceive the various concomitant notions, by which it may be modified into some kind of usefulness to the holder of it. By such considera-

tions, I restrain my judgment of others, who appear to me to have views of our Lord's mediation which seem to jar with his essential deity. But, for my own part, I think it right to regulate all my views of the evangelic economy, by those primary truths which are revealed to us respecting the Divine essence. This is a supreme matter, and admits of no compromise nor modification. The subordination of the manhood of the incarnate Word to his own Godhead, as well as to that of the Father and the Holy Spirit, I distinctly apprehend; and, therefore, I cordially receive what St. Paul teaches me, that "there is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." The "man Christ Jesus," therefore, being the mediator, I consider this middle term as relating to his own Godhead, not less strictly than to the Godhead of the Father and of the Spirit; and I conceive I am still further justified in this notion, by "the new and living way into the Holiest" being "through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;" clearly implying, that we are not to pass through his *person*, but merely through his flesh, in order to find that divine Shekinah, which we are to worship and adore.

Whatever, then, remains in your recollection of what I said, (as passing words may not always convey, to the most candid and intelligent listener, what they were precisely intended to express,) I wish you to interpret it, by the leading principle which I have now stated; and which I cannot but deem to be as much in harmony with the entire New Testament, as it is expressly declared in the two

passages I have referred to. I do not presume to object to any kind of confidence in our Lord's mediation, which does not affect that great truth, which I conceive the distinguishing language of those two passages was intended to guard; namely, the ineffable dignity of our Lord's divine nature, to which a mediatory character would seem incongruous and inapplicable; for, with all humility, might it not be asked, How can the divine nature be our medium of approach to the divine nature? In truth, the ground of my jealousy on this subject is, that in losing sight of St. Paul's strict reference of the mediatory character, to the manhood and to the flesh of our Lord, and in consequently extending it to his whole united person, an Arian sentiment is unconsciously admitted, which, from its very birth, tends to impair Christian devotion, and, more remotely, leads to still worse consequences.

Doubtless, in a certain sense, we may be said to have access to the Father, even through the united person of the Son: because, in his divine person, we become acquainted not only with his humanity, but also with his higher nature; which manifested its moral glory through the whole course of his sojourning below; thus making him, in the happiest sense, "Emmanuel, God with us." By acquainting ourselves, therefore, with Godhead in him, we become more capable of exercising our minds on Godhead, in itself. The ineffable impression of Deity, in which all true religion commences, becomes, through the incarnation of the eternal Word, as satisfactory to the under-

standing, as it is, in itself, mysteriously engaging to the heart; and, in contemplating him, who has come within the sphere of our nature, we acquire a confidence of mind, as well as of heart, in the other two persons of the adorable Trinity; of whose attributes, his divine character is the exemplification; and of whose love to man, he is no less the infinite evidence, than the infallible voucher.

I humbly conceive, that it is eminently in this sense we are to understand our Lord, when he tells us, that no man cometh unto the Father but through him; for he immediately proceeds to say, that he who had “known and seen him, had known and seen the Father:” which latter words clearly imply, that the access to the Father, of which our Lord had spoken in the preceding sentence, was that of the understanding and the heart: in other words, that truly to know him, was, virtually and effectively, to know the Father. I am not aware that there is any mention of access to the Father, through the Son, in the New Testament, of which this infallible view of the subject will not afford an adequate explanation.

But it by no means hence follows, that, in approaching God, we are not to derive increased confidence from what the incarnate Word has done, and is still doing, in our behalf. This ground of hope holds as forcibly, in our application to the Trinity, unitedly, as if the Father were the object of our distinct regard; for it is obvious, that we might reasonably use such a plea, in applying distinctly to our Lord himself: we might most fitly implore his mercy, on the consideration

of what he had done and suffered, to make our salvation attainable ; we might dare to urge, that He, who had already done so much, in the way of provision, would do what was still necessary to our sharing in his goodness. Whether, therefore, we direct our prayer to the blessed Trinity, conjointly ; or whether, in that freedom of devout contemplation which the Scripture has sanctioned, we address ourselves more particularly to the Father or to the Son, it is equally fitting that we should ask in the name of Him who has so stupendously undertaken our cause and become our patron. As incarnate, he has made himself both our brother and our father : our brother, as partaking of the same nature ; our father, as he is the second Adam, communicating to us a spiritual, as the first Adam has communicated an animal nature : both which relations are expressly ascribed to him in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 12, 13) ; where he is introduced as declaring God's name unto his " brethren," and saying, also, " Behold ! I and the children which God hath given me." And thus, also, as incarnate, he is our ever-living intercessor in that ineffable council in which, at the first, it was decreed, " Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." However firm our persuasion, therefore, of the philanthropy¹ of Godhead, in itself, the assurance of finding mercy and grace, from having our interests so infinitely secured at the inmost centre and source of divine beneficence,

¹ This is a strictly scriptural term : St. Paul has used it in Titus, iii. 4. His words are, " The kindness and *philanthropy* of God our Saviour."

is, to creatures so weak and so unworthy, an inestimable heightening of confidence and consolation.

All, therefore, I am anxious for, is, that, in our grateful estimation of the special aids and encouragement afforded us in the Gospel, we should admit no thought which could derogate, either from the philanthropy of God, or from the divine dignity of the second person of the Godhead. But are not both these most important matters brought into question, when it is represented, that the wrath of the Eternal Father, not only towards rebellious transgressors, but against all the human race, is such, that no child of Adam must dare to approach him, except through the intermediation of his only begotten Son? I only wish that sincere Christians, who speak after this manner, would soberly weigh the obvious import of their doctrine, as to the character of Him to whom, and the nature of Him through whom, that approach is to be made. I do not question their good meaning; but I would ask, Do their notions sufficiently recognise the infinite goodness of the Father, or the essential Godhead of the Son? Would not the inference seem to be, that the Father is an object of more awful reverence than the Son, and the Son an object of more familiar confidence than the Father? With respect to the human nature of our Lord, and regarding his divine nature as having clothed itself with our flesh, such a feeling is natural, and, doubtless, was meant to be excited. But where do we learn that the Godhead of the Son is, in itself, more approachable than the Godhead of the

Father ? or that we are, in any respect, to consider the divine nature of the one, either less to be confided in, or less to be dreaded, than the divine nature of the other ? In these high and holy matters, the revealed word of God, is our exclusive guide ; and I conceive that, here, we uniformly find the Eternal Father, and the co-eternal Son, to be alike gracious, and alike approachable, in all cases of indigence and weakness ; and alike terrible, and alike insupportable, in cases of obstinacy and rebellion. It is most clearly toward these alone, that the wrath of God has been revealed from heaven, or that the wrath of the Lamb will be exercised, at length, upon earth ; and I believe it would be impossible to adduce a single passage of the New Testament, which tends, ever so remotely, either to lessen our confidence in the divine nature in itself, or to countenance any difference of confidence in the divine nature of the Father and in the divine nature of the Son. That our confidence, both in the one and in the other, is inexpressibly heightened by the incarnation of the Son, and by all he did and suffered on our behalf, is most certain ; but it must ever be remembered, that this amazing condescension to our weaknesses and wants, was itself the direct effluence of God's infinite and essential love towards us ; that is, of the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; and therefore we must, in reason, believe that, however astonishingly it manifests, it could not create, nor even, strictly speaking, increase the immeasurable source from which itself proceeded.

That we ought to confide less directly, or less

unreservedly, in that primeval and fontal love, under the Gospel, than devout Jews confided in it, under the Law, would be a strange supposition. And yet, is not this notion included in the doctrine to which I have ventured to object? If that doctrine be admitted, I mean, if it be believed, that the divine nature, in itself, must not be approached by us with humble confidence in its essential philanthropy, those delightful sensations of heart which glow in the devotional part of the book of Psalms, cannot be experienced by Christian worshippers. Their views of the divine nature being, it would seem, less endearing, and less exhilarating, they would, in proportion, be less likely to be satisfied with the plenteousness of God's house, or to drink of his pleasures as out of a river. In fact, the whole business of prayer to God, would appear to become, not more free and more filial (as the uniform language of the New Testament represents it to be), but more difficult, and more tremulous, than it was under the old dispensation.

But do our Lord's own words lead to any such conclusion? Does he not, every where, encourage and warrant our direct and unqualified application to our Father which is in heaven? Does he not assert this relation, even to the evil, during their period of mercy: "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?"

Let us also observe, attentively, in what manner our Lord represents his own co-operation in the exercise of divine beneficence; and inquire,

Whether it does not imply, that while, in respect of his human nature, he has opened for us a new and living way to the source of beatitude, and is thus a mediator between God and man ; in respect of his divine nature, he is himself essentially identified with that source, and, as such, is to be contemplated by us, not as a mediatory, but as an ultimate, object of our hope and confidence ?

I conceive our Lord teaches us expressly, in one and the same sentence, to regard him in this twofold light, with safe consistency and due proportion. “If,” says he, “ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.” To ask in his name, was to recognise him as the Mediator of the New Covenant, which, as has been shewn, was the office of his human nature ; and it is, accordingly, the human nature of our Lord which is ever dwelt upon in the New Testament, as the grand link which was to sustain the whole Christian dispensation ; as well as the mysterious conduit through which it was to receive all its special benefits and blessings. It was expressly the name of Jesus Christ, of Nazareth, of which it is said, that there was no other name under heaven given among men, whereby “we must be saved ;” and it is at the name of Jesus that “every knee shall bow.”

But, while there is such wondrous potency in this name, as an instituted symbol and medium, He, who was pleased to assume it, for us men and for our salvation, has in himself another kind of power ; not, like that of mediator, beginning in time, and limited to a specific end, but essential to his divine nature, and, therefore, illimitable and

eternal. He accordingly says, "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it;" thus describing himself to be not less an ultimate object of confidence, in one respect, than an encouraging medium of access, in another.

The same important view of our Lord's essential glory, as unimpaired by his mediatorial condescension, is afforded in all he says respecting the sending of the Holy Ghost. As mediatory, he will pray the Father, who will give another Comforter, whom, he adds afterward, the Father will send in his name; that is, to co-operate in the great results of his incarnation. But, in the sequel of the discourse, he no less distinctly says, that he himself will send this divine coadjutor, expressing, first, the union of *his* act with that of his Father,—“the Comforter, whom I will send unto you from the Father,”—and afterward, simply saying, “If I depart, I will send him unto you.” Both which ideas appear to have been strictly retained in the minds of the Apostles; both being recognised in St. Peter's words, on the day of Pentecost. “Having received,” says he, “from the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”

I humbly conceive, therefore, that it is of importance, for our Lord's divine honour, as well as for our own spiritual comfort, especially in our approaches to the Throne of Grace, that we should keep in view, not only the mediatorial efficacy of our Saviour, as incarnate, but his divine participation with the Father, as “God over all blessed for evermore,”—in every instance and exercise of

grace and mercy, by which our exigencies are to be supplied, or our safety and happiness accomplished. And in the point of comfort and humble confidence, it particularly concerns us never to forget our Redeemer's express assurance to his Apostles, of the eternal Father's own loving kindness to them, independently of all intervention. These matters are not only of so sacred, but of so profound and delicate a nature, as to make it awful to look into them one hairbreadth farther than the inspired word, distinctly, or by certain intimation, discloses them to us. But the words of our Lord are sure words, neither to be disputed nor neglected; and what he has said, in the very close of his memorable last discourse, is too explicit to need a comment: "At that day," says he, "ye shall ask in my name; and I do not say that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God."

On these infallible oracles, I desire to rest my belief, and to found my notions of the divine dispositions and conduct, in the work of our redemption. I see, here, the three persons of the sacred Trinity, so equally united, in the exercise of grace and mercy to man, as to exclude every possible thought of any one of the Divine Persons being, if we may so speak, of a nature less accessible to our prayers than another: I accordingly am obliged to conclude, that there is no obstacle between the Mercy-seat and the suppliant, except those which may exist in his own mind and heart; I mean, in the darkness of his apprehensions, and

the deadness of his affections. For these hinderances, therefore, it is, that the Gospel has provided the most apposite and infallible remedies. The incarnation of the second Person is itself a provision for dispelling all darkness of mind; “for,” says our Lord, “he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.” Duly to apprehend, therefore, the divine character of the incarnate Word, is most truly to know Him whom we worship; while the power of the divine nature, acting upon us through the human nature, or, in the language of St. Paul, “the grace of the one Man Jesus Christ,” is the one medicine prepared, by omnipotent wisdom and goodness, for all the spiritual maladies of the human heart. It is only by the infusion of this grace, that they who are enemies to God in their minds through wicked works, can be reconciled to him: but we are no less assured, that, if we implore this highest blessing of the Gospel, faithfully and perseveringly, we shall not fail to receive it. The words of our Redeemer to the woman of Samaria, must be considered as spoken virtually to all: “If thou hadst known the gift of God, and who it is that speaketh to thee, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” When our Lord afterward uses the same figure of “living water,” it is added, “this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed in him should receive.” Those gracious words, therefore, expressed the concurrent beneficence of the adorable Trinity. The term, of God, eminently (but by no means exclusively, as may abundantly be shewn)

designating the Father,—the entire blessing of the Gospel, is a gift from him ; while, at the same time, the Son gives himself,—as we are taught, that he “gave himself for us ;” and, again, the Holy Spirit, in the special sense here intended, is declared to be the gift of the Son ; for it is said, “Thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”

Thus, therefore, in a standard instance, the universal applicability of which is indisputable, the equally profluent grace and mercy of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are so placed before us, as to make them, not less unitedly than distinctly, the objects of our humble, yet cheerful confidence : that this confidence may receive increase from many other considerations, to which I have not adverted, I am far from questioning ; I am jealous only of such views as would abate its cheerfulness ; and might even disturb our apprehensions of Godhead itself, by obscuring to us, in different ways, the Godhead both of the Father and of the Son. These are supreme and essential matters, which must not be compromised by any thing : if these be left unimpaired, then, I would say, let the individual Christian make his best use of the particular ideas which he may have been providentially led to entertain. But, in the doctrine of the divine nature itself, it is not less our interest than our duty, to receive no idea which is not expressly conveyed to us in the written oracles of God.

ON THE NATURE OF OUR SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST.

CHRISTIAN piety, according to the great teacher of the Gentile Church, is a combination of three principles;—faith, hope, and love. Respecting the two latter principles, there has been no controversy, except such as may be fairly resolved either into erroneous judgment, vitiated moral taste, or defective mental feeling.¹ The nature of faith has, on the contrary, been a frequent question of debate, even where there has been no apparent want of judgment, conscience, or affection. The most upright in practice, and the most sincere in devotion, have differed from each other in defining faith, or in stating the properties which are essential to its efficacy.

It is not my intention to advert to those differences generally. I confine myself to a single question, which I conceive to be of practical importance, and to derive special interest from the present state of, what may be called, the religious world. It is a well known fact, that numbers, at this day, peculiarly distinguished for religious zeal, are of opinion, that, in order to the soundness and efficacy of Christian faith, it is not enough that the understanding should explicitly apprehend, and the

¹ I conceive Fénelon's notions of Divine Love, to be resolvable into erroneous judgment; those of the Jesuits (so well exposed by Nicole), into vitiated moral taste; and those of Dr. Clarke, into defective mental feeling.

heart affectionately embrace, what are usually denominated the catholic verities; namely, The Trinity in Unity, the incarnation of the second Person, and the efficacious grace of the third, together with the undeniable results of those two latter verities, in the salvation of man; but that, in order to complete the character of evangelical faith, the mind must, also, distinctly apprehend the expiatory design of our Redeemer's sacrifice of himself; and explicitly rely on the satisfaction thereby made for sin, as the ground of reconciliation with God, and of re-admission to his favour.

From this extension of the essentials of saving faith, I feel myself bound to express my dissent. Whether I consult Holy Scripture, the reason of the case, or the course of things exhibited in the Christian Church, I can see no reason for including, in saving faith, the belief of more than the catholic verities, and their inseparable consequences: and, thus persuaded, I cannot but think, that, to urge additional points of doctrine, as matters of necessity, is to perplex a subject, which, of all others, it is desirable to make perspicuous; and to discourage a pursuit, which ought to be, as much as possible, made engaging to all the world.

In order to form a judgment on this point, it will be necessary to consider how much is comprised in believing the catholic verities, and their inseparable results. I will not stop to examine the tendency, which I conceive might be shewn, in the mere doctrine of the Trinity, to excite a deeper, livelier, and more comprehensive faith, than could be looked for from the sincerest apprehension of

the Supreme Being as, simply and strictly, one and individual: I come at once to the divine mysteries which specially relate to ourselves: the incarnation of the second Person, and the influential operation of the third.

If we consistently admit the former of these verities; if we believe, "with the spirit and with the understanding," that God was manifested in the flesh, for us men, and for our salvation; that the Word, which was in the beginning with God, and was God, became man, that he might act upon us with fuller influence, and engage us by a more sympathetic attraction; we must proportionally estimate both the depth of our exigence and the greatness of the purposed benefit. Where God himself acts, the work must be worthy of the agent. But, when this interposition most signally involves, what, in human language, would be called, extreme labour, deep contrivance, and exquisite address; and what, by any reckoning, must be deemed boundless benignity, infinite tenderness, and inconceivable condescension, it is impossible to measure such an undertaking by any other than the amplest and sublimest standard: we must believe that our case was such, as none but God himself could adequately provide for; and that our deliverance must also be such as it became Almighty Goodness to accomplish.

In the single truth, therefore, of God incarnate, are comprised, by infallible consequence, the most deep, definite, and comprehensive ideas of man's deliverance and salvation. The Gospel expresses, by a variety of terms, the privileges which it con-

fers, and the influences which it conveys. These terms have been the subject of multiplied controversy; because men of different temperaments have made their own respective tastes their standards of interpretation: and, as the mind of the interpreter has been ardent or frigid, dry or fanciful, the comment on the sacred text has, more or less, abated the strength of the idea, contracted its fulness, obscured its clearness, or impaired its beauty. For every such misapprehension, what surer remedy could there be, than a constant recollection, that the agent, in each instance, is God over "all?" The act, whatever it be, cannot then be trivial, undignified, or imperfect: it must, in common reason, be understood in as high and full a sense as the expression is capable of conveying. If the intended truth be embodied in a metaphor, be the figure what it may, it must no longer be explained into inanity. In the Godhead of our Benefactor, we have at once a reason for such modes of expression, and a rule for their interpretation. It is obvious, that no terms of common language could do justice to omnipotent beneficence; and, therefore, it is necessary to use images which, instead of limiting our conception, excite us to the utmost possible extension of our mental faculties.

For example, when our Redeemer declares himself to have come, that "men might have life;" and when he says, that, "as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, so the Son quickeneth whom he will;" and that the hour had come "when the dead should hear the voice

of the Son of God, and that they who hear, should live;" he speaks words, which, coming from less than Deity, would have been infinitely ambiguous; but which, uttered by incarnate Godhead, suppose a case, and describe an operation, of which it is morally impossible to mistake either the meaning or the importance. They tell us, by infallible implication, that the state of sin is spiritual death from which Omnipotence only can deliver; and that the state of grace is such a restoration of spiritual life as God alone can accomplish.

Again, when our Redeemer declares himself the physician of souls, were he less than God, we should understand the expression, as figuratively describing an excellent instructor, who, by suitable truths and motives, sought to reclaim the wandering spirit of man. But the GODHEAD of Him who speaks demands an infinitely higher sense of the term. The Physician being almighty, must be supposed to act like himself; healing souls, as he healed bodies, not by prescribing remedies, but by the exercise of his omnipotence; or, rather, by the effluence of his own essential virtue. "Some one hath touched me," said he, in the instance of the diseased woman, "for I perceive that virtue has gone out of me." And, in what concerns the spirit of man, St. John says similarly, "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." The spiritual health, therefore, which God incarnate bestows, must, in all reason, be worthy of its source; and, consequently, can be no less, than, as St. Peter has described it, a participation of the divine nature. Our Lord himself has so repre-

sented it, under various resemblances; but all that can be said is comprised in the primary verity of Emmanuel, God with us.

To life and health, one further requisite is wanting to make felicity complete; namely, an object fit to engage, and adequate to fill, our capacities of mind and heart. The verity of incarnate Godhead unites this ultimate provision with the simplest notion of our salvation. The redeemed soul cannot miss the supreme good when the Redeemer himself is its fountain; and, therefore, keeping this truth in view, we find the crowning blessing of the Gospel, so described by our Lord to the woman of Samaria, as to express, at once, all that could be said in human language:—"If thou hadst known the gift of God, and who it is that says to thee, give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." It would be hard to attach consistent meaning to these expressions, had they come but from created lips, but as spoken by Him, who is himself the fountain of living waters, who, to use the language of the Catholic Church, "is God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God," they meet every craving, every hope of our nature. The slightest acquaintance with ourselves will tell us, that there is a void in the human bosom, which nothing earthly can fill; a thirst for something beyond what is yet obtained, which

acquirement after acquirement has ever failed to allay. We know, too, that as the mind rises on the intellectual scale, this want is the more deeply felt; and that the groan of human nature for this mysterious boon is heard, uninterrupted and unvaried, from every age and nation. For this inward indigence, in a world so rich in external appointments, St. Augustin's solution alone accounts: "Thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless, till it resteth in thee." Our Redeemer, elsewhere, expressly adverts to this disease of the inner man, and declares himself its true physician when he says,—“Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” But, in his discourse to the woman of Samaria, he does more than promise relief from pain: he offers positive and perfect felicity; perfect in its own nature, however limited in its results by our capacity of reception. The thirst of the soul is to be provided for by an unfailing supply of refreshment, within itself, proceeding from the fountain of God with such profusion, as well as purity, as to verify to the full what Solomon had long before declared, but what it was reserved for a riper period perfectly to realise,—that a good man is satisfied from himself; that is, satisfied from that vital communication between his restored spirit and the essential spring of joy. When the restorer is himself that spring, there can be no failure in the accomplishment. GOD IS ALL IN ALL. To have a promise of constant and complete refreshment from this source, is to be assured of happiness,—present

and eternal. But the words of our Lord speak directly of immediate, rather than of future bliss: because the most general knowledge of God's goodness would inspire hope of happiness hereafter; but the possession of a paradise within, watered with unfailing streams from the river of the water of life, which flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb, was a blessing, of which explicit announcement could alone warrant the hope, and the special exercise of omnipotence, in this perturbed world, and in our low nature, alone effect the accomplishment. Such an announcement—an announcement than which nothing could be either more full or more impressive—we have in the words before us. They tell us, that the religion, which the grace of Christ establishes in the mind and heart, expels every wrong, and satisfies every right desire. The extinction of every wrong desire is necessarily implied in the first part of the divine declaration: "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst;" consequently, shall not have so much as the motive to seek for those broken cisterns which can hold no water. The satisfying of every right desire could not be expressed more strongly, than in the latter words: "the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life;" that is, my religion, the spirit which I communicate to my true disciples, and the internal powers and habits which they shall attain through my influence, shall be to them, in the centre of their hearts, that which a perennial spring would be to the natural appetite of

thirst in a hot climate. Such, undeniably, is the impression which this beautiful metaphor is fitted to make upon the mind. The omniscience, therefore, of him who used it, assures us that this natural impression was reckoned upon; and his omnipotence is the pledge, that there will be no failure in performance. It would be as unreasonable, as it would be impious, to suppose that any *vain* expectation could be raised by Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

It would be easy to multiply quotations, the meaning of which would be either coldly instructive, or inexpressibly animating,—would sink into littleness, or rise into sublimity,—according as they are supposed to be spoken by a finite, or an infinite being. But the instances I have adduced, suffice to illustrate the truth of the remark; and, few as they are in number, they suffice to shew the grandeur of the object for which the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. There is nothing pertaining to our well-being, which is not included in the life, the health, and the happiness of our immortal nature: and to be assured that Deity has come within the sphere of our nature for the express purpose of enduing us with these blessings, by his own omnipotent agency, is to oblige us to conclude, that the state which gave occasion for this divine interposition, implies a death, a sickness, and a misery, which Omnipotence alone could remove; and that the life, the health, and the happiness, which are thus restored, must be such as it becomes Almighty goodness to bestow;

that they must correspond, in depth, to the exigencies which they relieve; and in perfectness, to the source from which they proceed. I have now, I trust, adduced sufficient evidence, that the catholic verity of God incarnate, includes, either in itself, or by necessary consequence, a scheme of mercy for fallen man, rich in its provisions, deep in its efficacy, happy in its results, co-extensive with every exigence, and commensurate to every capacity of human nature.

But another catholic verity, equally insisted on in the sacred word, and equally embraced by the Christian cloud of witnesses, comes in to strengthen the impression, and enhance the satisfaction;—the influence and inspiration of the third person in the blessed Trinity, promised by the Redeemer to all his faithful followers, and held out, accordingly, by the first divinely commissioned teachers of the church, as the matter of assured hope, as the imperishable inheritance of all sincere believers.

It would be difficult, and perhaps in some respects presumptuous, to attempt the drawing of a line between the omnipotent operation of the second person and that of the third, in the continued work of bringing many sons to glory. Respecting the effects of their concurrent agency, we have every kind of satisfaction. We are amply instructed respecting what we may expect, and to what we ought to aspire; and we have abundant marks whereby not only to ascertain the truth, but to estimate the degree, of our spiritual attainments. We have also much information respecting the influence of incarnate Godhead, and even the

manner in which this admirable provision produces its effects on our minds and hearts. In fact, this subject is more dwelt upon than any other, both in the Gospels and the Epistles; and, while much is said, which at once conveys its meaning to every capable mind, there are numberless intimations given, tending to excite the search, and fitted especially, on comparison with each other, to reward the application of the spiritually intelligent. But while, on these points, we are not only enabled, but invited, to inform ourselves, a veil appears to be drawn, by which the distinct agency of the Holy Spirit is withheld from our view. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," said our Redeemer, "and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

On this great point of belief, therefore, we must keep ourselves strictly within the line of what is divinely revealed. Doubtless, we may exercise our thoughts on the intimations of Holy Scripture, and elucidate them to ourselves, by such parallelisms from the material world, as the language of inspiration suggests; but even this must be done with modest caution, not for the indulgence of curiosity, but for practical instruction, and substantial edification.

The fact of the Holy Spirit's operation upon the minds and hearts of all faithful Christians, is so repeatedly asserted, and so emphatically dwelt upon, in Holy Scripture, as to have secured to this divine verity a place in every summary of faith, which has not expressly avowed singularity of inter-

pretation. But, notwithstanding this universality of admission, there may be still room for calling attention to the special idea so repeatedly brought before us, of *actual inhabitation*.

Doubtless, each person of the ever-blessed Trinity is represented as actively concurring in our spiritual restoration. "No man," said our Saviour, "cometh unto me, except the Father, who has sent me, draw him." "I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me," said St. Paul: and not to mention numberless texts, which ascribe distinct agency to the several persons of the Godhead, in the renovation of our nature, we find our Redeemer promising the actual inhabitation of the Father and the Son, as the distinguishing privilege of those who faithfully improve that grace, whereby the animating principle has been implanted in the heart. "If any man love me," says he, "he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Still, however, there appears to be a sense, in which the Holy Spirit of God enters into the mind, and actuates the powers of cordial Christians by an allotment, as it were, peculiar to himself, among the divine persons. The grounds of such an allotment we cannot penetrate; but the fact is matter of divine revelation, and, as such, to be rested in with implicit confidence.

It follows, that to be really and practically a Christian, is not merely to be morally good, or religiously conscientious; it is not even to be formed to goodness, by a fresh exercise of divine

power, like that by which we were at first created ; it is not to be guided and protected by omniscient providence, so ruling as to make all things work for good : these are all, indeed, contained in the blessedness of a vital Christian ; but, above all these invaluable distinctions, Deity itself becomes, as it were, an animating principle within us ; and thus ensures to us a spiritual light, and life, and joy, to which no human effort could aspire, and which the united powers of angels could not communicate.

We learn from our Lord himself, that he specially referred to this highest possible gift, when he used the expressive figure of “living water ;” for when, on an occasion subsequent to his conversation with the woman of Samaria, he proclaimed in the temple, that “whosoever believed on him, out of his belly should flow rivers of living water,” it is added by the enlightened Evangelist St. John, “This he spake of the Spirit, which they that believed on him should receive.” And our Lord accordingly, elsewhere, makes this communication the pledge and compendium of all other spiritual blessings : “Ask,” says he, “and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you :” “if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him ?”

It is not necessary to prove to the attentive reader of Holy Scripture, that what is thus promised, is expressly entailed on the Church, as a perpetual inheritance. I shall, therefore, only

remark upon the idea of essential reality attached, by the inspired writers, to this inhabitation. St. Paul, on this point, uses the weightiest words that human language could furnish. "Know ye not," says he to the Corinthians, "that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" that is, clearly, ye are the temple of God, in this respect, and on this ground, that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. He then emphatically adds, "If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

The extent of what is comprehended in these words, we cannot know now; we can only know hereafter: but they do undeniably inform us of an admirable and glorious fact, fitted in itself, as it is directly applied by the Apostle, to excite in those whom it concerns, a satisfaction and a vigilance, beyond what could grow out of any other conceivable motive: a satisfaction, in being so possessed and permeated by indwelling Deity, as, supposing only honest concurrence, to ensure the happiest results and the most infallible issue; and a vigilance, lest, in any manner, the adorable inmate should be overlooked through neglect, or offended by profanation. Such is the express import of this apostolic declaration. In a subsequent passage, he enforces a most important practical admonition, by the same consideration; with this difference only, that, instead of declaring the Corinthian Christians to be temples of God, as being possessed by the Holy Ghost, he simply calls their bodies, the temples of the Holy Ghost.

I cannot pass over this particular expression without remarking, that it is, perhaps, as direct a testimony to the essential Godhead of the Holy Spirit, as could be given in so many words. A temple is the appropriate dwelling-place of Deity; by consequence, assignable only to that which is divine. When, therefore, it is thus assigned, by one liable to no mistake in titles or properties, being himself infallibly guided by the very Spirit concerning whom he wrote, the conclusion is inevitable respecting the essential deity of him, to whom an incommunicable right of deity is thus emphatically attributed.

The truth, then, of this wonderful fact, involves, of necessity, proportional consequences. It cannot be for any slight purpose, that Divine Goodness would make so magnificent a provision. The effects to be produced must be suitable to the agency. We cannot, therefore, in reason, estimate the benefits and blessings which accrue, from this source, to the sincere Christian, by any low or narrow standard. The mind which is supernaturally influenced, if not wanting to itself, must enjoy supernatural attainments; that is, it must be conscious of advantages and consolations, of too exalted a kind to be arrived at by any exercise of its own natural powers. Respecting the nature of these results, and the marks by which they evince themselves, there is need of exercising the most temperate wisdom. There is no instance, in which persons of weak minds, or undisciplined imaginations, have been more liable to delude both themselves and others; and the danger of the

delusion must be in proportion to the importance of the abused truth. Still, notwithstanding multiplied abuses, divine truth must be adhered to; and the attendant dangers must excite us to vigilance and discrimination.

Is it not, then, an obvious truth, that, if the Redeemer has sent another Comforter, who is to abide with the Christian church for ever; and if, in consequence of this divine appointment, all faithful Christians are temples of the Holy Ghost; effects are to be looked for, as excellent and beneficial, as the provision is admirable and glorious? In justice to their cause, they must neither be indiscernible nor ambiguous. To suppose so powerful an agency employed in working that which could not be discerned, would be to entertain a gross absurdity; and it would be equally unreasonable to ascribe any doubtful results, any effect which was not self-evidently pure and excellent, to the internal operation of the essential spirit of holiness.

If these principles be just, it will follow, that the agency of the Divine Spirit can, with certainty, be discerned solely in the production of pure virtue and unambiguous goodness. There is nothing essentially excellent, but moral rectitude alone. Every thing else being good or evil, according as it serves to promote, or obstruct, that supreme charm and enhancement of conscious existence. Our religion is genuine, so far only as it recognises God to be essential, infinite rectitude; and our hearts could unite themselves to God by no other than this central tie. Omniscience and Omni-

potence would be, not interesting, but infinitely terrific, were they not subservient to essential rectitude. They thus become infinite wisdom, and inexhaustible beneficence; making God himself the infinite resource of his ignorant and indigent creatures. This rectitude, then, which, as it actuates the will, is love, and, as it illuminates the understanding, is truth, and, as it governs the powers, is virtue; is also, as existing infinitely in God, the supreme source and matter, and, as derivatively communicated, the exclusive and infallible means, of rational and substantial happiness. To bring us to this happiness, from which, through the prevalence of our animal nature, we are prone to wander, is the express design of the Gospel. That design can be accomplished, only by re-establishing in our nature a predominant love of moral rectitude.

If, therefore, a Divine Agent has undertaken to accomplish the end of the Gospel in our minds and hearts, his unequivocal operation can be notified only by the actual production of this moral effect. If we are conscious of a love of moral rectitude, in its essence, which is God, and in its effluence, which is goodness, in a manner and measure above what we could have produced in ourselves by any wishes or efforts, we have so far, and no further, ground to recognise, rejoice in, and be grateful for, the effectual working of God's Holy Spirit on our hearts.

That the Holy Spirit has never wrought upon man, otherwise than morally and spiritually, is not meant to be asserted. The sacred word describes

other modes of operation, by which miraculous powers were conferred, or supernatural light was communicated, in proportion as the circumstances of the Christian church required such extraordinary aids.

How far, even now, the Holy Spirit may act upon the merely intellectual faculties, or even on animal nature, it is not for us to determine; nor can we ascertain whether something of this kind may not be involved even in the most ordinary operation of the Divine Spirit. But of this we are assured, that the evidence of the Spirit's agency rests, exclusively, on the moral results. Because, to our limited discernment, every thing, except pure moral rectitude, is fallacious. Be the mind impressed, or actuated, as it may, all which is not purely and unequivocally moral, may be the effect of a disturbed imagination, or even of diabolical delusion. We are forewarned of signs and lying wonders; and are told, that Satan transforms himself into an angel of light. These, and similar declarations, leave questionable all that does not stand our Saviour's test, "By their fruits ye shall know them." But these fruits are neither illapses nor ecstasies, as enumerated by St. Paul; they are either moral tempers, or their inseparable results. They are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." These are self-evident ingredients of moral excellence; and would have been pronounced such by any tribunal of honest heathen philosophers.

Here, therefore, and here alone, deception is excluded: the blessed Spirit evinces itself, and

shines, like the virtue it produces, by its own radiant light. Thus the true scriptural doctrine of the Spirit's influence, is itself the surest guard against all possible delusion; as notifying itself, definitively, by fruits which cannot be counterfeited; and which, in proportion as they are enjoyed, necessarily create a discernment, as well as dislike, of every instance of adulteration. Accordingly, full-grown Christians are characterised by this sole criterion,—the having senses exercised, by use, to discern both good and evil.

All doubt being thus removed, respecting the nature of the blessed Spirit's work upon the minds and hearts of Christians, it remains only to be inquired, Whether, and by what evidences, the moral operation of the Holy Ghost upon the inner man is distinguishable from the effects of a better natural character, or from the results of rational effort and philosophical self-culture?

I have already remarked on the obvious unreasonableness of supposing the omnipotent Spirit to reside, and operate, in the mind and heart, without notifying that residence and operation, by effects proportioned to such an agency; that is, by results consciously felt to exceed, in their nature or degree, all that we ourselves, by our own power, could accomplish. But the subject admits of more direct elucidation; the moral effects which we are authorised, by the sacred word, to expect, from the influence of the Holy Spirit upon our minds and hearts, contain properties which distinguish them from all gifts of nature, and all attainments of industry. The moral rectitude of the

Gospel differs from the highest natural rectitude, as the reason which directs man to act suitably to his circumstances, differs from the instinct by which the mother bird tends her young, or the bee collects its honey. The man of natural rectitude, in his best actions, rather follows inclination than obeys principle; and he does what is right, because, through a happy temperament, he is not tempted to do what is wrong. But the moral rectitude of the Gospel springs from apprehensions, to which the human mind is naturally a stranger; its principles are not indigenous, but implanted; they are not the growth of natural tendencies, but of supernatural influences. The right tendencies which a better nature inspires, however valuable in their measure, are confined, both in aim and sustenance, to the sphere of sense and reason. Christian rectitude, on the contrary, is conscious of deriving its life from those invisible realities which could only have been divinely manifested: and accordingly, under this brighter light and nobler influence, the mind receives impressions of moral good and evil, of a depth, a delicacy, and a comprehensiveness, unknown, and unthought of, under the mere influence of natural goodness. In this latter case, the relation of man to man is uniformly more adverted to, and acted upon, than the relation of man to God. But divine grace in nothing manifests itself more clearly, than in inverting this order, by making regard to God the primary source and sovereign motive of duty to man. It is, in truth, this practical ascendancy of invisible above visible objects, which forms the distinguish-

ing characteristic of Christian rectitude ; and were it possible that any one who felt these superior influences, could, for one moment, confound them with natural goodness, the least attention to the different nature and properties of one and of the other, would instantly detect the error.

But though Christian rectitude be distinguishable from natural goodness, is it equally distinguishable from the effect of the mind's own efforts to attain the Christian virtues ? Until this, also, be shewn, the moral operation of the Divine Spirit on the mind of man is not demonstrable.

This undeniable truth has already been adverted to, that Christian rectitude derives not only its strength, but its essence, from the influence of invisible realities. The question, then, is, Can the mind, by any efforts of its own, create in itself the apprehension of things invisible, necessary to such an effect ? Christian rectitude then only exists, when the objects which the Gospel places before us, are not only attentively thought of, and diligently reflected on, but practically felt, and predominantly loved. The objects of this world mislead us, not merely as employing our thoughts, but as engaging our affections. The objects of a better world can free us from this captivity, by drawing our affections with still stronger attraction. It is not enough, then, that we should force ourselves to think of those objects. This is, in a certain measure, in our power ; and, though such efforts, persevered in, prove our sincerity, they will then only give us strength, when we are not merely impelled by ourselves, but engaged by the

object: our inordinate love of things visible and sensible, is our malady; and the transfer of our supreme love to things divine and invisible, can, alone, be our cure. But who that is sensible of this disease, and is anxious for this remedy, does not feel, that he cannot effect this revolution in his mind, that he cannot thus transfer his affection? It may be in his power to think, it may be in his power to act; but the feeling of his mind moves by its own law, and mocks his effort to raise it above its actual level. He can, by thought, place the object in the mind's eye; but the result will depend on an interior sympathy which the object itself awakens, and which, till so awakened, can no more be commanded, than we can, at pleasure, extend our sphere of seeing or hearing.

He, therefore, who cordially aspires to Christian rectitude, will be anxious to possess that affection for divine objects, without which, his own heart instructs him, Christian rectitude cannot exist; and consciously feeling that he cannot animate his own deadness, he will betake himself to that Being, on whom he wishes to fix his supreme love, in the hope of obtaining from above, what he finds utterly beyond his own power. And who has ever succeeded in such a suit, who did not gratefully acknowledge the quarter from which his relief came? The light which thus, however gradually, dawns; the indescribable peace which, in such exercises of mind, is morally certain to spring up within the breast; evince themselves, by their independence on will, to be more than human: and by their excellence and efficacy, to be not less than divine.

Merely joyous emotions, though of the most ecstatic kind, would not answer this description. These belong to the animal frame, and are often an effect of physical, or even mechanical causes. Such sensations, therefore, even when devotionally excited, are to be suspected, rather than relied upon. We can be sure that we apprehend divine things divinely, only so far as we apprehend them morally; that is, with predominant love of the moral excellence which resides in the great objects of our faith, as light resides in the sun. Doubtless, such apprehensions, in proportion to their soundness and strength, will be accompanied with the purest and truest pleasure; but it will be a pleasure not less satisfactory to the understanding than delightful to the heart; a pleasure, from the consciousness of the mind being at once reinstated in the order which makes it right within itself, and reunited to that object for which its capacities were formed, and with which alone they can be satisfied.

But however imperceptibly, as to day, or hour, or moment, such apprehensions may have arisen (and surely they are never more genuine than when they so originate), the sublimity of their nature cannot be concealed from him who possesses them. An affection enkindled by supernatural objects, not through calculation of their importance, but, as it were, by their own indescribable magnetism, distinguishes itself, to the mind, from every thing attainable by mere reflection, as much as actual relief from pain differs from the alleviation which fortitude had afforded. Let moral obligation be ever so strongly felt, if

there be not also moral taste, restraint will be painful, and performance irksome. From "the ideas suggested by religion," says Dr. Johnson, "we recede with reverence, except when stated hours require their association." And he assigns the reason, because, says he, the good and evil of eternity are so ponderous, that "the mind sinks under them in passive helplessness, content with calm belief, and humble adoration." Can mere reflection go beyond the limit thus marked by one of the wisest and most upright of his day? How striking must be the change when that which repelled, becomes attractive; when the mind, instead of sinking, soars; and when the passive helplessness, of which Dr. Johnson speaks, is changed into animation and joy, which no other object, whether of sense or thought, could inspire!

There would be little occasion for reasoning on this subject, were it not that the far greater number even of the morally upright, do, with Dr. Johnson, recede from religious ideas, except when compelled, by call of duty, to advert to them; and even then, either sink under them in passive helplessness, or, at most, are content with calm belief, and humble adoration. In such apprehensions, there is obviously nothing which the mind cannot obtain by its rational powers; and there is, at least, presumptive evidence, that no other agency is concerned. But, by the good providence of God, there is no want of recorded proofs, that minds as great as that of Dr. Johnson,¹ have far otherwise

¹ It is not unworthy of remark, that even Johnson himself, at a happier moment, has presented a view incomparably above what I

apprehended the great facts of revealed religion, being not merely dragged to them by duty, but drawn to them by inclination, and interested in them, not merely by real, but by unrivalled pleasure; and as the general language of such persons may confidently be appealed to, so it might be questioned, Whether any one, who exactly expresses the kind of feeling now referred to, has ever omitted to ascribe them to a higher power than that of his own mind; namely, to the supernatural grace of Christ, communicated through the influence of that other Comforter, who, according to our Redeemer's promise, was to abide with the Church for ever?

It is, in truth, on the supposition of such influences, that the exercise of prayer is enjoined as the stated supporter of Christian piety. Were it not to be expected that when we bring our minds into the presence of God, a flame would descend and enkindle the sacrifice—steady reflection, on the reasons and motives of duty, would be a more simple, as well as more direct method of improving our moral habits, than prayer; than to be continually addressing a being, who, like Baal, in the contest on Mount Carmel, gave no token that he heard. But, happily, the fact is otherwise established, by the united testimony of pious men; “who,” says Bishop Burnet, in his conversation

have quoted, and implying the substance of those apprehensions of divine things for which I contend: I refer to the fine concluding lines of the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, “But when the sense,” &c. &c.

The first line, it will be observed, acknowledges an influence which the passage I have quoted would seem to overlook; an influence, in fact, which must be either fanciful, or divine.

with Lord Rochester, “having felt, upon their frequent applications to God in prayer, a freedom from those ill impressions which formerly subdued them, an inward love to virtue and true goodness—an easiness and delight in all the parts of holiness, which was fed and cherished in them by a seriousness in prayer, and did languish as that went off,—had as real a perception of an inward strength in their minds, that did rise and fall with true devotion, as they perceived the strength of their bodies increased or abated, according as they had, or wanted, good nourishment.”

If it were my special object to elucidate this most important and interesting point, it would be easy to multiply testimonies and examples from all ages of the Church. But the incredulous would still be unsatisfied; and the truly devout have the best possible evidence in their own breasts. My purpose has been to shew, that a consistent and cordial belief of the catholic verities implies the essence of vital Christianity. I have confined myself to a few particulars; but, few as they are, they imply the essence of vital Christianity; for who can dispute, that, to aspire to the life, the health, and the happiness of the inner man, which God incarnate imparts from himself; and so to have the Holy Spirit dwelling in the mind and heart, as to be effectually purified by his inspiration, and daily and hourly strengthened by his might, is to seek the life and substance of Christianity: or that, in proportion as any one succeeds in this pursuit, he becomes vitally and essentially a Christian? To the pursuer of these

blessings, success is ensured by infallible promises; and to be clearly conscious of possessing them, is what St. John calls having the witness in oneself.

Will it, then, be said, that this pursuit cannot succeed, and that this consciousness cannot be relied upon, except the mind possess also clear apprehensions of the manner in which the sacrifice of our Redeemer propitiated the Divine benignity? Such an impossibility must arise from one or other of two causes; either because the internal blessings of the Gospel cannot sincerely be sought without a clear apprehension of all the Christian doctrines; or because, even though those blessings should be sincerely implored, God will not hear the petition, if clear doctrinal apprehensions be wanting. But neither of these suppositions would consist with a memorable passage of Scripture already adverted to, namely, the conversation with the woman of Samaria. Our Lord declares to this woman, that, if she had known the gift of God, and who it was that spoke to her, she would have asked, and, on asking, should have received.

Nothing, obviously, is here required, but a sense of spiritual want, and an application for the supply of that want to the only adequate quarter. The language neither admits of limitation, nor requires comment: and he that spoke, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

That the wants and miseries of the inner man may be felt independently of doctrinal knowledge, is little less than self-evident. When conscience is once thoroughly awakened, our 'internal exi-

gencies become matter of actual experience : while the objects of doctrinal knowledge can be apprehended only through express communication ; and will be more or less clear and correct, in proportion to the medium through which they are conveyed, and the intellect by which they are received. Perceptions, therefore, of doctrinal propositions, are perfectly of another nature from the conviction which a man may feel of the misery and weakness of his corrupted nature. Perception of doctrines depends upon intellectual light ; but conviction of inward evil proceeds from moral sensibility.

There are, undoubtedly, truths, without the knowledge of which, this moral sensibility will not be awakened ; and in proportion to our apprehension of which, the sense of internal evil will be lively or languid, distinct or confused. But the truths which are necessary to awaken conscience, are those which God has been pleased to make known, more or less, to all mankind : and the truths of revelation which give distinctness and depth to moral feeling, are either such as define and elucidate what had been, in substance, apprehended through the light of nature and conscience ; or they are such as correspond so perfectly to the moral views, attainable through nature and conscience, as not only to be received without effort, but to imply conscious satisfaction, and, perhaps, sensible relief. Under these descriptions we must place all discoveries of our natural relations to God, as intelligent and moral creatures ; of the qualifications necessary, on our part, to make those relations effectual to our happiness ; and

of the misery which must prevail and increase, in proportion as those qualifications are wanting. I cannot hesitate to add, that the same rule will equally hold good respecting all the provisions of Divine grace; which directly tend to repossess us of those qualifications, and to bring back the mind and heart to their natural and only satisfying object.

This exalted end was expressly aimed at by the noblest, and, indeed, only true philosophy of the pagan world. When, therefore, the sense of moral malady, and the cravings of moral appetite, in many wonderful respects, anticipated the announcements of the Gospel, it cannot be doubted, that all, of the character which St. Paul describes, as doing, by nature, the things contained in the law, would, on fair and full exhibition, not only rejoice in the clearer discovery of what they had darkly guessed already, but would also congenially receive those notifications of Divine goodness, and overtures of Divine influence, which, though hitherto un hoped for, because Divine revelation alone could sustain such a hope, would appear to them analogous to every former apprehension; and, in fact, to be that which they chiefly wanted, however unable they had been to explain that want to themselves.

It requires no argument to shew, that whatever could be looked for from an upright pagan moralist, is equally to be reckoned upon in any conscientious individual of present times, who begins practically to apply his mind to the great concerns of religion. Let only his moral sensibility be thoroughly awakened, and he will need no

comment on what is declared in Holy Scripture respecting the intrinsic evil of sin, the weakness of human nature, the value of Divine interposition, and the identity of all true goodness with the supreme love of the infinite good. In every such declaration, true moral sensibility would find, either the transcript, or the developement, of its own deepest apprehensions ; and, as the mind could not but be struck with the delineation of the actually experienced evil, so, in proportion to sincerity of feeling, it could not but be interested by the announcement of the most strictly correspondent remedy. In a word, the morally perceptive mind, in proportion to its measure of moral discernment, cannot fail, of itself, to apply the Scriptural portraiture of man's moral misery, and to rejoice in the Scriptural prospect of his moral deliverance.

Is it, then, conceivable, that purely doctrinal notifications, in which the declared evil is matter of as abstract belief as the good, should be as readily adverted to, or dwelt upon, as statements which reflect back the substance, and solve the mystery, of pre-existing feelings ? Nothing is more natural, than to give credit to the tidings of deliverance from misery which is actually felt ; but nothing is less natural, than to admit the existence of calamities, which neither the mind nor the senses perceive. Were, therefore, the ideas of collective condemnation, and entailed malediction, as undeniably existent in the New Testament, as they are prominent in certain modern codes of theology, it is likely they would not strike, and it is evident they could not interest, in the same degree or

manner, as descriptions of the felt disease of the heart, or announcements of an adequate remedy. In these latter instances, the morally awakened mind has not only anticipated much of what is declared, but has, in itself, a key to whatever is more darkly intimated. On the other hand, in references, even of the Divine word, to what took place in the counsels of God, consequently to the fall of man, or preparatively to his recovery, as nothing could be anticipated, so neither can a particle be supplied: we absolutely know no more, than that which is expressly revealed; and as we have little explanation from feeling, we have still less elucidation from analogy. When, therefore, the most attentive student of Holy Scripture sees such matters, at best, but through a glass darkly, it is possible, nay, perhaps, more than probable, that a mind practically impressed, but not biassed, by external teaching, should, although with the most reverent acquiescence, comparatively pass them by, as not requiring its direct attention; as telling it of what was once for all done for it, not of what was now to be pursued by it. On the most conscientious view of such passages of Holy Scripture, the conclusion might at least be, that the facts therein declared were to be rested on, as infallible pledges of success in seeking the healing of diseased nature, and deliverance from moral bondage. But, whether the passages of Holy Scripture, which bear this construction, would be actually so adverted to, or whether they might not be passed over, as too mysterious for human explanation, would depend on circumstances, which might dif-

fer widely, in persons the most equal in moral sincerity.

In supposing this possible oversight of the more mysterious points, respecting man's fall and redemption, I advance no peculiar notion. I find the pious Dr. Doddridge making a tantamount supposition in his 8th sermon on Regeneration, under the head of, "Caution against making our own feelings a Standard for judging of others:" and, in addition to his own candid views, he quotes Dr. Owen, as going so far as to say, "that some may, perhaps, have experienced the saving influences of the Holy Spirit on their hearts, who do not, in words, acknowledge the necessity, or even the reality, of those influences." I should myself be sorry to contract Dr. Owen's stretch of charity. I doubt not but the sincerity of religion may exist, in such cases as he supposes; but it seems impossible, that such a persuasion should not be a hinderance to its growth and perfectness.

But I have been supposing a case of a perfectly different nature. I do not understand how any one could read the New Testament with common attention, and overlook the repeated assertions of the Holy Spirit's influence upon the minds and hearts of men. On the contrary, I do not comprehend how any private reader should be able to settle his own mind, respecting the certain import of the Scriptural intimations to which I refer. I will not pronounce on possibilities: I will not say, what may have happened in some individual cases; I doubt, but I will not venture to deny. I merely say, that, in point of fact, we have countless

instances, in which the notifications of man's spiritual misery, and his deliverance through the internal influence of grace, have been dwelt upon and digested, and kept daily and hourly in view, where, at the same time, the doctrinal intimations of Holy Scripture have been humbly and implicitly rested in, as conclusively consolatory in their general import; and, for that very reason, not deemed necessary to be examined in detail, or with any solicitude of inquiry.

Nor, I conceive, is such a conduct attributable, on just grounds, to ignorance or misapprehension. A seeker of the effectual grace of God may be satisfied, in matters doctrinal, with merely implicit faith, on distinct and strong considerations. It may appear to him unnecessary, for instance, to ask grounds and reasons for God's mercy to man, when the matter of the mercy is so conspicuous and substantial. The consolatory fact, that Omnipotent Grace is in readiness for all who cordially implore it; that He who lived and died, to prepare and establish a dispensation of grace, now ever liveth to effect by his power, what he has provided for through his goodness; may, from the very commencement of a religious course, come so clearly into view, as to leave no doubt of the Throne of Grace being ever open to the willing heart; and, consequently, to imply no want of those doctrinal encouragements, which are, perhaps, a necessary resource against those suspicions of the Divine benignity, which more timid minds might, otherwise, find it difficult to surmount.

And here, I would humbly and soberly ask,

Whether, indeed, different parts of Holy Scripture may not be condescendingly adapted to the exigencies of different classes of men; and whether, therefore, it is in the nature of things for all men to be alike impressed with all? The variety of human tastes and capacities is self-evident; and it is equally obvious, that, according as minds are of a higher or lower order, they are influenced by more refined, or more gross considerations. Thus, one is animated to exertion by the mere prospect of a yet unattained good; while another needs to be propelled by the dread, or, perhaps, the actual sense, of calamity. It cannot be doubted that this variety is providential; it is too deeply marked to be resolved into education: it can be accounted for only by original difference in the individual frame. Such a variety, therefore, would hardly be overlooked in the sacred word; and, in point of fact, we find therein, as occasion requires, the most alarming denouncements, and the most engaging invitations. The denouncements exhibit the terrors of the omnipotent Sovereign; the invitations notify the ready mercy of the all-gracious Saviour. Condemnation and malediction are the theme of the former; life, and peace, and joy, of which nothing can despoil us, are pressed upon us by the latter. It is not insinuated, that individuals of any character of mind are wholly unconcerned in the threatenings, nor that the lowest natures may not become capable of the nobler incitements; but, in truth, each class seems to be specially provided with its own double set of motives. To higher minds, moral good is made yet more attractive, by the most

vivid counter-representations of moral misery ; while those whose dread has been awakened by condemnation and malediction, have their appropriate relief, in the promises of averted wrath, and unreserved forgiveness.

Would it not seem, that a necessity, founded in human character, for this twofold provision, was one of the reasons of the two concomitant ministries of the Baptist and the Redeemer ? I say, the concomitant ministries, for it is a remarkable fact, that John's teaching was not merely preparatory to that of our Lord ; for, had this been the case, the school of John must have merged in the school of the Redeemer as soon as the latter was formed ; whereas, on the contrary, both went on together, in such different methods, as to furnish grounds for our Lord's comparison of his own mode of training to piping and dancing, and that of John to mourning and weeping. Our Lord, however, expressly admits, that the men of that generation might have saved themselves by embracing either ; since he charges upon them, as the completion of their guilt, that they had rejected and vilified both : it of course follows, that the twofold method, of our Redeemer and the Baptist, was a studied accommodation to different tastes and habits ; it being clearly our Lord's meaning, that, as the children in the market-place had tried, by variety of offers, but without effect, to consult the wayward taste of their companions ; so, Divine goodness, in the gracious dispensations of that day, had consulted the opposite extremes of human liking, alike studiously, but alike unsuccessfully.

Was this an expedient peculiar to that one occasion? or does an analogous provision make a permanent part of the Gospel dispensation? The latter supposition seems to be intimated in the two-fold standard by which our Lord elsewhere declares the men of that generation shall be condemned; namely, by the case of the men of Nineveh, who repented at the preaching of Jonah; and by the case of the Queen of the South, who came from such a distance to hear the wisdom of Solomon. It is here necessarily implied, that our Redeemer might be regarded under one or other of two aspects: one, more terrible than that presented by Jonah to the Ninevites; the other more attractive than that of Solomon to the Queen of Sheba, when she was drawn, by the fame of his wisdom, from her own distant land. A farther fact, no less obviously supposed, is, that our Saviour was ready to receive those who came to him, whether they were subdued by his terrors, or engaged by his wisdom; and it follows, by necessary consequence, that, as they who were driven to our Lord by terror would no more be rejected for want of nobler motives, than the Ninevites, when they sought mercy with fasting and supplication,—so, still less, would votaries, drawn simply by our Lord's wisdom, be repelled, even though no feelings of dread mingled with the attraction which drew them to his presence.

Must not, then, the Gospel of our Redeemer be the just representation of himself? Adequately to know Him, is the substance of vital Christianity. The Gospel is the mirror in which we see him, as

he was, and as he is ; for “ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” In this Gospel, therefore, as in its glorious Author and subject, there must be terrors for the men of Nineveh, for those gross and animal natures who are only to be so reduced. But there must be also a cloudless light of excellence, a pure effulgence of that wisdom, of which the incomprehensible Word is the infinite fountain ; in order to draw minds, like that of the Queen of Sheba, as resistlessly, and as delightfully, as she was drawn to King Solomon.

If we are thus warranted to reckon upon two aspects in the Gospel, corresponding to those of its Divine Author, and suited to the twofold object, of alarming those who can be alarmed only, and of attracting those who are susceptible of attraction, under which of the two heads shall we place what is said of condemnation, malediction, the guilt of man, and the anger of God ? These, if any, are clearly the provisions for the men of Nineveh ; and they who are overcome by these terrors, can be cheered only by an adequate apprehension of the corresponding consolations—averted wrath, cancelled condemnation, readmission to forgiving mercy. But if there be some, now, as well as formerly, who are more impressed with the essential evil of sin, than with any legal penalties to which it can expose ; who dread and abhor the carnal mind, not because it leads to the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, but because it alienates from God, and is enmity to God ; who, seeing in God the only rest of their otherwise restless spirits ; and in God incarnate, the only medicine and suste-

nance for their otherwise hopelessly diseased and helplessly famished souls ; if even so occupied with these views, as to be incapable of feeling any lower considerations, however true in themselves, and necessary in their place,—can they, on this account, be justly charged with deficiency of evangelical apprehensions ? If these do not dread what others dread, is it not because they are effectually impressed with an incomparably deeper danger, the danger of losing God for ever, of hating everlastingly Him, whom to love is heaven ? If they do not seek what others seek, is it because they depreciate forgiving mercy, or what has been done to leave that mercy unobstructed ? No : it is because they are not jealous of God, but solely of their own hearts ; because they are sure there is no delay on God's part if there be none in them : that Christ freely invites, therefore all depends on their being enabled to bow to his yoke ; and that the true forgiveness must be, deliverance from the yoke of sin, and initiation into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

I might now proceed to ask, Whether it is conceivable, that he who seeks this spiritual deliverance, thus intently and supremely, is likely to be rejected on account of the simplicity with which he pursues it ? But, if the observations just made be founded, the point is settled, by the equal recognition of the two inducements,—the terrific, and the attractive. Obviously, no motive of pleasure or delight entered into the feelings of the penitent Ninevites ; and no sentiment of terror or alarm quickened the movements of the Queen of the

South: yet the two cases are equally applied to shew what ought to have been done, and, if done sincerely, would have been done successfully, by the men of that generation. It follows, that He who changes not, will receive *now*, whomsoever he would have received *then*; that as they who come, like the men of Nineveh, terrified by the apprehension of Divine wrath, and the threat of everlasting destruction, will not be repelled, if only there be in them any measure of the hatred of sin, and the love of goodness; so they, who, like the Queen of Sheba, come to the true Solomon, from an unmixed desire of imbibing his wisdom, and enjoying his influence, will scarcely be the less welcome, because, even in their first approach, they, in some sort, anticipate the maturity of Christian virtue, and the love that casteth out the fear which has torment.

Though this argument can scarcely be strengthened, it receives infinite illustration from the records of the Church. It is notorious, that the doctrinal views which are insisted on by so many modern theologians, were either not known, or not adverted to, from the close of the first century, until the age of the Reformation. Then, for the first time, after a lapse of fourteen centuries, the theory of a doctrinal faith, giving ease to the conscience, through reliance on what Christ had done to satisfy Divine justice, became popular, through the concurrent zeal, on this particular point, of both Luther and Calvin. The industrious and well-intentioned Milner, who, in doctrinal ardour, yielded to neither reformer, after anxiously examining the Greek and

Latin Fathers, from Justin Martyr, to the very last name which could deserve attention, acknowledges, that the doctrine of justification, in its explicit form, had been lost, for many ages, to the Christian world; and he laments, that, among all the Fathers, he finds no approach to the forensic notion of justification, except in Ambrose alone; of whom, after all, he ventures only to say, that he "is, perhaps, more clear of mistake, in this respect, than most of them." Of Augustin, to whom, not without just reason, he has allotted one hundred and eighty-seven pages, he fairly states, that he perpetually understands St. Paul's term, "to justify," of inherent righteousness; as if, says he, "it meant sanctification."

If, then, this alleged error was of practical moment, should we not discover some consequent defect in the Christian character of these celebrated men? Their writings afford the means of minute and comprehensive inquiry: we can still converse with them, and feel the heart-pulse of their religious affections. We see them embrace Christianity, as the spring and principle of a spiritual and heavenly life, not only qualifying for, but anticipating, the joys of immortality. We mark their unaffected triumph, as humble as it is cordial, in what Divine goodness has done for them, in transferring their affections from the polluting and enslaving objects of earth, to the supreme and infinite good, by communicating to them that new and spiritual life, of which God incarnate is the fountain. We not only hear them rejoice in the conscious possession of this life, but we see them

anxious for its growth, and aspiring to its fulness : their ambition is, to be more than conquerors, through Him who has loved them : to attain, by his influence, not merely the reality, but the maturity, of moral goodness ; in order that they may the more perfectly enjoy Him, who is essential goodness, and to whom created spirits can have access, only in proportion as they are made like to him in purity and goodness.

That such are the characteristics of these illustrious men, no one acquainted with their writings has disputed ; and Mr. Milner, whose value for piety was still stronger than his doctrinal predilections, attests their practical excellence, by evidences from their numerous volumes, faithfully, but, perhaps, not always felicitously chosen. That they were free from speculative, or circumstantial error, is not pretended : they lived in times of increasing darkness ; from sharing in which, nothing but continued miracle could have preserved them : and had they been so preserved, they might have been unfitted for doing the necessary service to their generation. But error, which neither vitiates nor lessens piety, is as a shade to heighten its lustre. The vigour of a plant is proved by its bearing all climates ; and the piety which remained unchanged, when every thing else was altered, and almost every thing else subverted, could be no other than divine. Above all, that religious errors should multiply, and yet leave the essence of religion unimpaired, bespeaks the same hand guiding the Church through its seasons of peril, which anciently led the ark through the waters of the deluge.

What has now been said of the nature of that piety, which was thus divinely protected and sustained, need not rest on any man's testimony. We have its full exemplification in our hands. The collects of the ancient Church, happily retained in our established service, and forming the much greater part of our public devotions, are ample and unequivocal specimens of the spiritual views, principles, and feelings, of those by whom they were composed. As far as we know, they are a work of the seventh century, having received their present form from the hand of Gregory the Great. We are assured, however, that they express nothing with which preceding ages did not accord; and as our reformers found them in the then established formularies, so do they still occupy the same place in the services of the Roman Catholic Church. It is not necessary to dwell on the undisputed excellence of these compositions. Preserved, by Divine Providence, unaltered for twelve hundred years, and fed upon during that period by all devout spirits, as the manna in the wilderness by the Israelites,—they are, next to the sacred word itself, the clearest standards whereby genuine piety may be discerned; the surest guidance by which its progress may be directed; the highest mark to which its wishes would aspire. In a word,—where, except in the sacred Volume alone, does perfect Christian devotion glow with purer ardour, or mount upward with a firmer or a safer flight? Could any thing essential, then, be wanting, where the heart spoke this language? Yet we see, on the authority of honest Milner, that the age which pro-

duced our Prayers, was that in which, to be justified, was deemed the same with being *inherently just*; and in which, consequently, the forensic sense of justification was unknown. We come, therefore, to this point: if our ancient formularies be an adequate transcript of Christian piety, then Christian piety may be possessed in its fulness, without pre-eminent, or even particular, attention being given to the doctrines in question, even as they are intimated in the divine word, and without acquaintance with them, as they have been contended for by Lutheran and Calvinist theologists.

I cannot, then, help concluding, on the whole, that distinct apprehensions of these doctrines, in any view, but especially in the view common to Lutherans and Calvinists, are not essential to saving or justifying faith. I conceive this conclusion to be warranted, by what has been remarked: first, respecting the depth and comprehensiveness of those more prominent verities, which, from agreement of the Church concerning them, have been denominated Catholic, and which, in themselves capable of being simply apprehended, on many accounts appear likely to engage primary and prevalent attention; secondly, respecting the gracious latitude of reception, expressly adopted by our Redeemer, in condescension to different capacities and temperaments, and which, being so established, must, of necessity, hold good for ever; thirdly, respecting the case of Christians in general, from the second century downward, who, it is confessed, however eminent in piety and virtue,

were unacquainted with some of the most leading tenets in modern theology.

I should not, however, do justice, either to the Christian cloud of witnesses, or to my own argument, if I were not here to make an explicit distinction between the mysterious transactions to which those doctrines relate, and the conclusions which have been drawn from those transactions, and which form the matter of the doctrines. I have not meant to throw the slightest shade either on the reality or the importance of these preliminary measures in the great work of Redemption, by which the Incarnate Word, in conformity with the plan settled by infinite wisdom, made gratuitous mercy to fallen man, consistent with the settled order of God's universal government. The notifications on this subject, though involving obscurities impenetrable to human thought, are, in point of fact, too distinct to be overlooked, and too momentous to be depreciated. They have, accordingly, been implicitly received and reverentially rested in by the whole body of Catholic Christians, in the view of whom, the propitiatory merit, and invaluable intercession, of our great High-Priest, have ever been considered as forming a link in the chain of redemption, only below *that*, from which every good and perfect gift proceeds,—the essential benignity of Him, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Will it be asked, Why, then, did not these adorable mysteries more frequently and more expressly occupy their attention? I might, perhaps, not unfairly answer, because they were so

fully persuaded of them, and so perfectly at rest concerning them, as not to leave room for continued reiteration. It is an unquestionable fact, that the truths of which we are most certain, do not oftenest occupy our thoughts. We more readily recur to those matters in which much interest is blended with some degree of doubt: where no doubt whatever remains, we are disposed to leave the matter at rest, unless when fit occasions bring it before us. In this way, exactly, do the ancient Christians appear to have apprehended the primary mysteries of redemption. Their belief could not have been more fixed; their reliance could not have been more implicit; their acknowledgment could not have been more grateful. It was, notwithstanding, a practical, more than a speculative, impression. They felt respecting the primary arrangements of Divine Wisdom and Goodness, as they felt respecting the deepest of all truths, and the foundation of every other,—the eternal and infinite being of God; and they acted alike in both. Having nothing farther to do, respecting either, in a way of abstract thought, they took each, unreservedly, for granted; and gave themselves, with full purpose, to the pursuits and exercises, which followed from the one and from the other, as infinitely certain and infinitely important consequences. The ancient Christians were the more disposed to proceed in this manner, from the perfect idea which they entertained of the work accomplished once for all by our Redeemer. They conceived, that the Incarnate Word, by His own divine agency, had effected every requisite for

man's salvation, except what, by the necessity of nature, must be effected in man's own mind and heart. In their view, He had removed for ever all that could have thrown doubt on penitent man's admission to Divine favour. He had, moreover, provided an inexhaustible store of quickening, enlightening, and strengthening influences; or, rather, had made himself, to all willing souls, the unfathomable source and overflowing fountain of beatific life, and light, and love. And he had associated with himself, in the gracious undertaking, the third person of the ever-blessed Trinity,—the Holy Ghost, the Comforter,—to be his fellow worker, within the depths of the human spirit: creating, by his omnipotent operation, in the inner man, a capacity of imbibing the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. To these provisions, what could they add, except that, in which man himself must be a worker together with God? They were, therefore, free from all solicitude, about what was necessary to be done *for* them, and applied their undivided care to what was to be done *in* them. They knew nothing could be wanting to complete the former; but they were equally aware, that this could benefit them only by subserving, and issuing in, the latter. To this one thing, therefore, they confined their solicitude, because they were assured, that here, alone, could the mystery of Redemption be defeated in its purpose. Thus, while the ancient divines considered the *salvability* of all, and especially of those initiated by baptism into the Christian Covenant, to have been the immediate and unconditional result

of the mysterious work accomplished on the Cross; they deemed that only, which was effected, through the omnipotent grace of Christ, in the mind and heart, together with its everlasting results, to be strictly and properly *salvation*. I do not mean to say, that they actually applied these distinctive terms. I assert, only, that such were the ideas with which their minds were possessed, and from the spirit of which they never deviated.

Modern theologists would probably wonder to hear it intimated, that they ascribe *less* efficacy than the ancients to the act of Redemption accomplished on the Cross. It would, however, seem, that, in the view of the ancients, readmission of returning penitents, was, through that great transaction, made more direct and simple than, in certain later systems of divinity, it has been supposed to be. According to ancient belief, the gate of mercy stood open for every contrite prodigal; and the grace, which bringeth salvation, was in constant readiness to flow into every willing heart; whereas, in modern doctrine, it is not enough that the heart should relent, that sin should be unreservedly hated, and that grace and mercy should be unfeignedly implored; there must be added to these, an express mental recognition of the considerations on which, in the divine counsels, the ransom of guilty man was given and accepted; as if, until this act of individual appropriation, the primæval malediction still attached to each person, and the gate of mercy remained barred against him. It is obvious, that this view of the case presents a subject of anxiety, of which the ancients

had no suspicion; and, on a comparison of both views (on whatever side truth may be), is it not indisputable, that, in supposing an unqualified offer of grace and mercy, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, to all who desire deliverance from spiritual thralldom, we ascribe a more absolute efficacy to the propitiation of Christ, than by conceiving grace and mercy, though provisionally obtained, to be, as it were, only in abeyance, until, in addition to the sincerest desires, a certain distinct action of thought shall establish direct and personal interest in the blessing?

In thus stating the import of doctrinal faith, I mean strictly to adhere to the representation of its advocates. The unprejudiced may judge whether the views of the ancients are not, at least, equally honourable to our Redeemer; as well as more simple in theory, and less embarrassing in practice. But I cannot stop here: I would ask a graver question; not in the spirit of controversy, but from a wish, that the path of the just may not be gratuitously obstructed, nor made narrower than it was left by its Author. I would ask, on what intelligible ground, an exactness of intellectual perception (a matter, in its nature, so dependent on contingencies, so independent on will, and so unconnected with rectitude of heart) should be necessary to make prayer effectual, or faith vital? What, it may be demanded, is this supposed accuracy of ideas to effect? Is it to make the salvability, obtained once for all, more absolute; or the salvation, to be accomplished in each individual, less ne-

cessary? If neither be admissible, what middle place shall be assigned to this new claimant; between salvability and internal salvation; implying more than the former, yet not embracing the latter? or, if even such a station were found by metaphysical subtlety, what effect could we suppose mere intellectual correctness to have on our state towards God, which would be consistent either with God's moral excellence, or with the moral objects of the Gospel? It ought ever to be kept in view, that, in the nature of things intellectual, apprehensions are not ends, but means; ministering to our affections, but in no respect supplying their place. So far as intellectual apprehensions discover the object of right affection, they are necessary; so far as they supply motives to right affection, they are valuable; so far as they do not impede it, they are harmless; so far as they neither cherish nor impede it, they are nugatory. Consequently, except in the first of these instances, that is, in discovering, by the understanding or mind, what the affection is to love, our apprehensions must, clearly, be tried by our affections, and not our affections by our apprehensions.

But it may be said, that the doctrinal faith in question comprehends more than intellectual apprehensions; since, to make it effectual, there must be not only express belief of what our Redeemer has done for us, but there must be exclusive reliance on the thing believed. It does not follow hence, that the case is altered. Reliance itself is not necessarily more than an act of the understanding. Power, for example, is relied

upon, from mere experience; wisdom, from common sense. Even truth and goodness may be confided in by those who have neither; because reason suggests, and fact evinces, that these qualities of mind ensure stable and consistent conduct. Reliance is a moral act, solely when truth and goodness are sympathetically relied upon; I mean when the confidence reposed in the possessor of these virtues is inspired by a portion of congenial feeling. Until then, the firmest reliance will be an act, not of the heart, but of the mere thinking faculty; the effect of calculation, or courage, or, it may be, of prejudice; often, no doubt, of use in human affairs, as contributing to sustain the course of this world; but, self-evidently, not valuable in His sight, who describes himself as searching the hearts and reins. It is certain, that our reliance on our blessed Saviour can neither be too cordial nor too comprehensive; as we are to love God, not only with the heart, but with the understanding and strength, so are we to rely on Christ with every faculty which we possess. But, as in the former case, the root of love is in the heart; and the action of the other faculties could deserve the name of love, so far, only, as they moved by the influence of that supreme affection, of which the heart is the seat; so, in whatever respect we rely on our blessed Redeemer, our reliance is genuine, and will be beneficial, so far, only, as it springs from our spiritually discerning the moral excellencies of our Saviour's character, and spiritually estimating the moral purposes of his incarnation.

Besides, in order to rely, even rationally, on what our Redeemer has, once for all, done in our behalf, our reliance must be limited *by his divine intention*. We must not rely on him, in that instance, for what he did not design, but for that, merely, which he meant actually to accomplish. Now, what can an individual reckon upon as accomplished, in his behalf, by that great act, except salvability? Suppose, then, this reliance ever so strong, it can assure of nothing but the thing relied upon, namely, possibility of salvation; a benefit which it would be deplorable not to possess; but, of itself, stamping no character; affording no direct comfort; common to the penitent and the profligate: in a word, nothing, or worse than nothing, except so far as it sustains and encourages the pursuit of that grace which effects salvation, by actual redemption from iniquity, and purification of the mind and heart. Salvability, therefore, is *every thing* to faithful exertion: but *nothing* to abstract thought, except in the single case of despondency. Against that disease of the mind, *it* is the true specific; but in every other case, he, only, who acts upon it, thinks of it as he ought. Accurate ideas, whether of salvability, or the grounds of salvability, are doubtless not without their use: they prevent needless solicitude, and enlighten the path of duty: but if the first principles of the Gospel of Christ are to be left behind in the pursuit of perfection, how much are the clearest views of salvability to be left behind in the pursuit of salvation!

It is possible so to rely on salvability as to neglect salvation : in other words, it is possible so to confide in what Christ has, once for all, done *for* us, as to be not enough solicitous about that which he effects *in* us. But it is impossible cordially to pursue salvation, and not duly value salvability. He who *builds* on a foundation, shews his reliance ; not he who talks of it, or rests in it, as if what was meant solely *to be built upon*, would, of itself, serve the necessary purpose. He who builds on a foundation, cannot but confide in that on which he builds. But it is not by exercising his thoughts on the foundation that he hopes to advance his work ; his persuasion, on the contrary, is, that by zealously pursuing his work, he gives his truest, his only true, testimony to the validity of the foundation.

But this, though a just, is an inadequate parallel ; a foundation is left behind, and disappears. The rock of our salvation, the stone laid in Zion, is not more the ground of our hope, than he is our shelter and strength. We do not, then, in any measure turn from our Redeemer, when we think less of what he did *for* us, and more of what he does *in* us. We are, merely, not riveted to a single act, in order that we may the more freely and comprehensively attach ourselves to the Infinite Agent himself ; who, glorious as that one act was, still accomplishes, and will go on to accomplish, as glorious, yea, more glorious things.

If there were room for any question, respecting our comparative regard to *the dying*, and *the living*, Saviour, it could not but be granted, that the dying

Saviour may be so contemplated as to imply disproportioned attention to him, "who is alive for evermore;" whereas, unfeigned homage of the heart to the living Saviour, necessarily comprehends all that the Redeemer is, and that he has ever accomplished. To dispute this conclusion, would be to deny the force of our Lord's own reasoning against the idle distinction of the Scribes, between the altar, and the gift; the temple, and its gold. "Ye fools, and blind!" said he, "for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple which sanctifieth the gold? the gift, or the altar which sanctifieth the gift?" Does not the spirit of this resistless argument at once justify the votary of *the living* Saviour against all possible charge of overlooking his death? May it not be asked, Whether is greater, the act, or he who gave dignity and efficacy to that act? As he, then, who swore by the altar, swore by the gift upon the altar; and as he who swore by the temple, swore by the gold of the temple, and by its great Inhabitant; so, by parity of reasoning, he who duly values our Redeemer, as a living Saviour from the thraldom of sin, and from the malady of corruption, values, by infallible consequence and inevitable implication, every preliminary step in that great work; every link in the golden chain, however obscure from its height, or hidden within that light which no man can approach unto. In presuming to allot to different acts of our Lord different measures of importance, we are liable, at every step, to transgress our just limit, and incur the blame of presumption. But, in attaching our minds and hearts

TO HIMSELF, as the way, the truth, and the life, with an unfeigned desire that he may accomplish in us the good pleasure of his goodness, and bring us to the enjoyment of all that he has prepared for us, what, on any just reckoning, can we be accused of omitting? When we thus unite ourselves to the fountain, is there a stream from that fountain which we do not virtually estimate? or an effect of its influence, known or unknown, which has not, either explicitly or implicitly, its proportion of our reverence and gratitude?

But, it may be asked, has any such regard to our Redeemer as that now described, been found to survive the rejection of explicit doctrinal faith? On the contrary, have not the deserters of the doctrines in question almost uniformly proceeded to divest Christ of his divinity, and Christianity of its vitality? Such, it must be allowed, has almost always been the fact. But it is one thing, to renounce those doctrines, and another, never to have admitted them. That they, who have never admitted those doctrines, may vie with any who hold them, in estimation of our Redeemer and of his Gospel, has been seen in the conduct of the ancient Christians. And with respect to such as have rejected those doctrines, it may be asked, Whether, in every instance of the kind, the truths which relate to the living Saviour, and internal salvation, had not been previously, either so absorbed, or so embodied in the ruling doctrinal system, as to make it inevitable, that, when the latter was parted with, every distinguishing truth of the Gospel would be involved in the rejection?

It would be easy to shew the justness of this observation, by numerous instances, both of individuals, and of religious communities. If the fact be so, we are obliged to infer, not the necessity, but the danger, of the doctrines in question; a danger from which, notwithstanding the frequency of the case, no effectual preservative has been yet discovered. But, independently of this result, not only the utility, but the authenticity, of doctrinal faith, may be questioned, on account of its tendency to damp the ardour of Christian virtue. Doctrinal faith relies on the death of Christ, as ensuring everlasting salvation to the possessors of such reliance; it acknowledges internal renovation, as an evidence that the death of Christ is rightly relied upon; but it founds personal security, present and eternal, on an interest in that death, through the connecting tie of faith, and not on the effectual working of that grace, which the death of Christ *once* procured, and *ever* communicates. The clearness and growth of this internal operation, therefore, may, no doubt, still be valued, as a source of more abundant comfort; but, in the view of doctrinal faith, this is no longer "the one thing needful;" and, consequently, will not be pursued as the indispensable and supreme concern. The rectitude, which is essential to every degree of true religion, will prevent gross neglect; but in the view of doctrinal faith, the process within is not only a secondary concern, but a result, which, in the necessary measure, will come of itself. Whence, then, should arise a zeal for growing in grace and in the knowledge and love of God? He who believes that

Christ's death brings salvation within our reach, but that Christ's grace, working in us and with us, makes salvation ours,—such a one must, in proportion to that faith, be neither barren nor unfruitful. The effects of Divine Grace, which he discovers in his heart and life, and the fidelity with which he yields to Divine attractions and follows Divine guidance, are his sole pledges of actual interest in the redemption of Christ. These exclusive grounds of personal security will, therefore, not only be guarded with unremitting care, but it will be an object of solicitude to make them more and more stable, and more and more luminous: such will be the natural and necessary consequence of exclusive dependence for appropriate comfort, on, what St. John calls, the witness in one's self. This course, however, is not easy to animal nature; it implies, to self-indulgent spirits, a discipline which is irksome, an exertion which is painful. If therefore, there be any other source of comfort or ground of safety less rigid in its demands, and, by consequence, less revolting to human frailty, it will infallibly be preferred, except by disinterested lovers of goodness. Such a source of comfort, and such a ground of safety, seems to be implied in doctrinal faith; the distinctive character of which is, to trust in the Redeemer's sacrifice, not merely as procuring and communicating the grace which saves internally and spiritually, but as making an everlasting purchase; in securing which, the simply confident, the mere believers in what was thus done, experience no defeat. If such a view did not abate exertion, and encourage indulgence,

human nature would not be what it is ; yet, what law of human nature does not make exertion indispensable to solid comfort, and indulgence dangerous to every true interest of man ? Is it possible, then, not to suspect a system which seems inseparably to involve these formidable consequences ? and not to prefer that plain and simple view of redemption through the grace of Christ, which at once precludes every idea of consolation, except that of which the heart is the seat, and the life the demonstration,—which is warranted by enlightened conscience, and sanctioned by universal reason,—which alone assimilates to God,—alone qualifies for heaven,—alone meets the demands, and corresponds to the capabilities, of intellectual man, made in the image of Deity ?

I am, however, far from meaning, that all, who are theoretically attached to doctrinal faith, equally incur its practical disadvantages. I expressly excepted from such results the disinterested lovers of goodness. In these, the heart will not be confined by speculative restraints. Raised above all narrow prejudices by an appetite for the chief good which He, who is its source, has awakened, and which nothing but himself can satisfy,—they consciously feel, that they can enjoy their supreme object, in proportion, only, as they are congenial to that object in taste and nature. Taught this lesson, not more by reason than by experience, they do not suffer theory to divert their aim, or impede their flight. The love of God,—not merely as their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, although enhanced, undoubtedly and inexpressibly,

by each of these relations; but still the love of God, as God, that is, as essential living rectitude, goodness, and perfection,—is, self-evidently, to their minds, the substantial commencement of heaven on earth,—the indispensable qualification for heaven hereafter. This experimental evidence rules their minds, and rivets their hearts. Such cannot be seduced by any confidence that hell can be unconditionally escaped, because they are themselves *inwardly* instructed, that God and heaven cannot be unconditionally enjoyed; that they must themselves be made capable of the bliss in which they are to share; that, without such capacity, heaven would be to them everlasting irksomeness; and the irksomeness would be the greater, the higher the heaven. It would be easy to enumerate instances of this happy discrepancy: their amount would not invalidate the rule; it would merely create an exception, not disturbing our reasoning, though inexpressibly grateful to our feelings.

I do not mean to grant, that the class of persons now referred to have been, in no respect, impeded by their doctrinal creed. In certain individuals, the winged mind may have surmounted all speculative confinement. But such cases are rather to be admired as prodigies, than admitted as examples. Few have escaped an idea of rivalry between the work wrought for them and the work wrought in them; or have been able wholly to conquer the fear of depreciating the former by suffering themselves to rejoice in the latter. Hence, high spiritual attainments have been an object of jealousy, rather than ambition. The suspicion

that the Redeemer might be injured by conscious eminence of virtue in the redeemed, would necessarily inspire a fear of admitting such consciousness; and, consequently, damp the pursuit after degrees of virtue, from which that consciousness would be inseparable. Minds of the purest character, and most delicate feelings, would be aptest to feel these effects; and when the doctrinal creed was once unreservedly adopted, I cannot conceive by what corrective such apprehensions and jealousies could be averted.

These remarks, if founded, would seem sufficient to bring doctrinal faith into question. But a more weighty inquiry remains; namely, Whether doctrinal faith, while most zealous for the Redeemer's honour, does not really, though without intention, detract from his excellence, and obscure his glory?

In order to perceive the glory, and appreciate the excellence, of our Redeemer, we must see him in his own light, and estimate him by the standard he has himself afforded. We must take his own account of the motives which engaged him to assume our flesh, and to tabernacle amongst us. In his divine discourses, he has made both his design and himself known to us. We can be wise, therefore, only by receiving this instruction; and happy, only by improving this acquaintance.

In thus appealing to our Redeemer himself, it is far from my thought to question, either the authority, or the satisfactoriness, of the apostolic doctrine. This also, affords us invaluable instruction, and infallible guidance. But it supposes, not supersedes, the immediate lessons of incarnate

Godhead. These have an incommunicable pre-eminence over all which was ever delivered; inasmuch as, to him who spoke, God gave not the spirit, as he is intimated to give himself in every other instance, by measure. Let us, then, as we are most bounden, be ever mindful of what has been written for our learning by the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour; but still, let it be our highest and holiest care to sit, as it were, with Mary, at the feet of Him, who spake as never man spake. Except we hearken to his gracious words, we cannot be certain that we are his disciples indeed; nor can we estimate what we lose in so relying on the purest and highest streams, as to draw less assiduously, and less profoundly, from the fountain.

Let us, then, endeavour to learn from our Redeemer's own words, the leading purpose of his humbling himself, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Does he, any where, tell us, that his object in this last great act was, to furnish a ground of decisive and conclusive reliance, which might be resorted to, and rested in, as, in itself, being to any man a pledge, or giving to any man a title, to life everlasting? Is there an intimation, in any one of our Lord's discourses, of the salvation which he came to confer, being, in its nature, thus simply and summarily purchasable? or that man's chief evil, and chief good, were of a nature which admitted of the evil being averted, and the good secured, substantially and everlastingly, by any single act of ever so transcendent merit, or ever so effectual expiation?

What our Lord's death accomplished in this mysterious respect, even when most directly adverted to, is, for the most part, darkly intimated, and never clearly explained; as if it were meant to be taken for granted, rather than examined; and to afford, not ultimate assurance, but preliminary and collateral encouragement.

On this particular view, however, of the great sacrifice, our Saviour does not dwell. Whether in discoursing to his disciples, or to the multitude, he is occupied with two topics, the spiritual, and the mystical, kingdom of God; the former, to be established in the hearts of individuals; the latter, to maintain its course in the great body of human society, until, from being a little stone cut out without hands, it should become a mountain, and fill the whole earth. The latter of those topics is, of course, never out of view; and, perhaps, is alluded to oftener than common interpreters suppose. But the former, the kingdom of God within, is the predominant theme; it is the object to which every thing else is made subservient; and to provide for which, in every possible way, amply, exquisitely, and perfectly, seems to have been the chief aim and business of the incarnate Saviour.

Were it possible to proceed regularly through our Lord's discourses, whether preceptive, parabolical, or prophetical, we should, in every instance, find him talking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. By this term, it is, that he himself designates the Gospel dispensation; and by doing so, even without farther explanation, he compendiously expresses the great design of his

coming; namely, to establish a spiritual dominion in the minds and hearts of men. This, then, if our Lord himself is to be listened to as the interpreter of his own design, was the grand end to which all means, motives, and aids, were to be adapted; and for the sake of which, he himself was willing to become, at once, an agent and an instrument, the physician and the medicine, the source as well as dispenser of those reanimating, purifying, and divinely ennobling influences, by which alone, man, morally enthralled, and sunk in animal grossness, could be freed from degradation, or restored to the happiness for which he was created.

The skill, the address, the depth, the harmonious uniformity, and, if I may dare to apply the term, the comprehensive philosophy, with which our Redeemer, as it were, lays the foundations, and forms the polity, of his invisible empire; the provision which he makes for taking the deepest possession of the heart; for engaging the better capacities against the worse propensities; for governing every useful, and correcting every pernicious, movement of our nature; and for, at length, bringing every thought into obedience to himself; these particulars, however overlooked, even by too many conscientious readers, will not fail to fix the attention, and excite the wonder, of those who, by duly apprehending the interiority of the design, are qualified to estimate the machinery which has been thus wonderfully prepared by the everlasting Word, for the perpetual use and application of the ever blessed Spirit.

Is there any part of our Lord's discourses, to

which the character just given does not strictly belong? Is there any part which treats of what are called doctrines, on the one hand, or of external duties, on the other, abstracted from inward principles? In one word, has not all that our Redeemer, at any time, spoke, direct relation to the spiritual renovation of the inner man; to making the tree good, that its fruit may be good; to cleansing that which is within, that what is without may be clean also; to having root in oneself, oil in our vessel with the lamp; to prayer, which brings down the Holy Spirit from on high; to the single eye; and, finally, to that purity of heart, which so beholds God, as to drink in beatitude, from its only true and inexhaustible fountain? If such, then, be the matter of our Redeemer's teaching, must not his actions have corresponded to his words? Must not what he *did*, have had the same design as what he *said*? In a word, must not his incarnation, his birth, his death, his resurrection, have all been intended, in their several ways, to effect or facilitate, to sustain or promote, what he himself uniformly declares to be his great object;—that spiritual kingdom in the minds and hearts of men, which, in the series of our Lord's discourses, was the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last.

Consistency would lead us to this conclusion, had we nothing to guide us but the tenour of our Lord's instructions. We hear of effects to be produced, in human feelings and characters, to the accomplishment of which, considering the weakness of human nature, no skill in the teacher, and

no compliance in the learner, could be thought adequate. In pointing, then, to heights above the utmost reach of unassisted man, did not the Redeemer clearly imply, that Divine influences would be in readiness, commensurate to the object? and that what he announced in his doctrine, he would infallibly effect by his omnipotence?

But, on this point, we are not reduced to reasoning. Due attention to our Lord's discourses will enable us to see, that he does not merely state the object of his coming, but, in countless instances, represents this great mystery of Godliness, as the source, principle, and sustenance, of the kingdom which he is about to establish. The very life of its subjects, he declares to be *from himself*,—"I am come, that they may have life;" and that, not merely by communication, but by spiritual union and co-incorporation. "I am the vine," says he, "ye are the branches; as the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, so neither can ye, except ye abide in me:" and, as if to express at once all that could be conveyed in language on this sublime subject, he says to Martha,—“I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.” From these, and similar passages, what less can be inferred, than that our Redeemer has united himself to our nature, in order, through that nature, to reunite our minds and hearts to himself: that thus, living by him, we may, as if by natural instinct, not only love and obey him, but become, in some sort, as he himself was in this world?

And in strictest harmony with this result of our Redeemer's living in our nature, is the efficacy which he himself ascribes to his death. It should seem as if, in the deep-laid scheme of redemption, the energy of the dying Saviour was, in the order of things, to act first upon the human heart; and by disenthraling it from its corrupt principles and habits, make way for the assimilating influence of his living excellence. It might not be difficult to point out an exquisite fitness in this arrangement, even on natural principles; but our Redeemer has himself thrown a bright ray into the depth of his purpose. On a near view of his death, he reconciles his human feelings to the revolting object, by the consideration of its eventual effect on the minds and hearts of men. "Except," says he, "a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. And I (he adds), if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

The meaning of these words cannot be mistaken. They assert Christ's death to be necessary, in order to the accomplishment of his leading object; and they anticipate a grand and invaluable result, as certain to ensue (as if in the nature of things) from the awful trial through which he is about to pass. We, therefore, in this place learn from our Lord himself, one, at least, of the great reasons why the blessed Redeemer suffered death; and one, at least, of the joyful prospects which induced him to endure the cross, despising the shame.

It would seem, if we may dare to indulge thought on so deep a subject, that, in the business

of our spiritual reinstatement, the laws of human nature were to be strictly adhered to; and that adequate means and instruments, in every respect corresponding to those laws, were, at whatever expense, to be prepared; that the deepest sensibilities were to be engaged; the strongest and tenderest sympathies were to be excited; the mind and heart were to be penetrated to their inmost recesses; and what was most interesting was to combine with what was most awful, in captivating the whole man, and making him a willing votary of a spiritual sovereign. Less than this, cannot be implied in the words,—“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” What is this, but that, by dying on the Cross, he was to become the mental magnet of the world? That God manifest in the flesh, would advance in ascendancy over human nature, in proportion as he sunk lower in the scale of humiliation.

Allowing, then, the words of our Saviour to convey this meaning; the fact, thus established, is of self-evident importance. Means, so provided, by such an agent, for such a purpose, present a subject of thought, a business of practical concern, and a theme of admiring gratitude, to which no verbal estimate could do justice. To overlook this signal purpose, therefore, of the death upon the Cross, through predominant regard for any other aspect, which may be thought, however justly, to belong to it, is a most serious injury, at once to our Redeemer and ourselves: to ourselves, because the attraction which our Lord ascribes to his dying on the Cross, is exactly that, of which, every

one of us, each day and hour, stands in infinite need. It is the specific medicine for the chief disease of our nature. Our animal nature and our corrupt habits draw us downward to earth, where every thing enthrals and defiles, and where the very air is pestilential. What, of course, do we so much need, as a counter-attraction, strong enough to resist the gravitation of our lower nature, and aid the immortal mind in rising toward its native heaven? But how great soever the influence of our Redeemer's death, we must suppose our own recourse to that influence to be essential to that participation. We must apply the remedy, in order to enjoy the benefit; the mind's eye must be fixed upon the object, by which the mind is to be influenced; and the affections must be engaged, before the heart can be attracted.

It is, therefore, so far only as we directly advert to this mysterious provision, that we can share in its effects. To overlook it, then, on whatever pretence, or through whatever misconception, is to deprive our inner man of one of the most valuable, most indispensable, and, certainly, most dearly purchased, blessings of the Gospel; and therefore, in thus injuring ourselves, we peculiarly injure our Divine Benefactor; because, that, to which he specially looked forward, as the compensation of his sufferings, we disregard, and, in our own instance, render fruitless. The Prophet Isaiah, in predicting that wonderful transaction, declares, that the adorable sufferer shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. To see of the travail of his soul, is no other, than to witness the happy effects of his

unparalleled labours on the minds and hearts of men ; and specially, to witness such effects, as he himself peculiarly desired and anticipated ; such an effect, clearly, was, the drawing of men's regards and affections upward to himself. I conclude, therefore, that, for the failure of this, nothing else can compensate : and, if there be any supposed theological view, which contributes to this failure, by keeping the mind's eye fixed in another direction ; or by blunting the sense of spiritual want, which would otherwise awaken desire for the means of relief,—that theological view, be it ever so extensively received, or ever so zealously pleaded for, if truly chargeable with such a tendency, must be either partially, or wholly, erroneous ; it being impossible, that truth should counteract itself, or, as it were, demolish with one hand what it raises with the other.

But perhaps it will be said, that our Redeemer himself has so directly sanctioned that view of his death, upon which doctrinal faith relies, as to secure it from all such charges as that now brought against it. “ As Moses,” said he, in his discourse with Nicodemus, “ lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up ; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

We have here, undoubtedly, our Lord's own statement of his great purpose in dying on the Cross. Of course, whatever this passage clearly contains, we are bound to receive ; and what is here overlooked, we may, not unfairly regard as of inferior importance. These deeply significant words, therefore, are worthy of our closest

attention; and, in examining them, we are obviously bound to avail ourselves of the concomitant light afforded us, in the parallel which our Lord points out, between the design of his crucifixion, and the relief provided for the wounded Israelites, by means of the brazen serpent. It was, doubtless, for our clearer instruction, that our Lord made this allusion. To ascertain the points of analogy, will, consequently, be our surest means of interpretation.

The Israelites, in punishment of their sins, having been bitten by poisonous serpents, were dying by thousands. When they implored mercy, however, their suit was not rejected. Yet it did not please Divine Wisdom to avert the calamity by a simple exercise of omnipotence. An intermediate instrument of healing was to be provided. God commanded Moses to make the figure of a serpent in brass, and to raise it on a pole; with a promise, that all such wounded persons as fixed their eye on this object, should experience immediate deliverance.

In alluding, then, to this transaction, our Redeemer seems clearly to intimate, that the poison of sin is, to our inner man, what the poison of the serpents was to the bodies of the Israelites. The moral calamity, in the one case, obviously resembles the corporal infliction, in the other: the likeness is strengthened, by that mysterious circumstance, in the first infection of our nature, which occasioned the original promise, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." In the case of the Israelites, the outward man had already, within itself, the principle of death; which, without relief, must produce inevitable and speedy

destruction. Our inner man, in like manner, has contracted a no less deadly contagion, of a spiritual nature; which, if not subdued and expelled, by some means as effectual as the provision for the Israelites, tends, by a like necessity, to death eternal.

When the Incarnate Word, therefore, declares himself the antitype of that ancient medium of deliverance; and asserts a likeness of design, between the conspicuous exposure of the serpent, and his own elevation on the Cross,—he evidently intimates, that, as corporeal health was recovered by the Israelites, through contemplating the brazen serpent with the eye of the body; so, spiritual health would be obtained by all, who should rightly contemplate the crucified Redeemer with the eye of the mind. This resemblance, in the method of relief, would have been deducible from the mere assertion of a typical relation, in that ancient transaction, to the great object of our Saviour's death. But the corresponding circumstance, so expressly mentioned, of being lifted up, leads us necessarily to conclude a similarity in the mode of operation; and thus awakens a train of thought, at once as instructive and as interesting as could be suggested to the mind of man.

“As Moses,” says our Redeemer, “lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up:” that is, he must be thus fitted for being contemplated, by the mental eye of all mankind, as the brazen serpent was fitted, by its elevation, for being contemplated by the wounded Israelites. There is, in these words of our Lord, a depth of meaning, evidently intended to excite, and reward,

our investigation. “ He, who spake as never man spake,” suffers us, here, to look into his own deep thoughts, of the deepest mystery of godliness. The light thus afforded, is, therefore, at once, invaluable and infallible. The Son of Man, he says, must be lifted up ; that is, as he himself afterwards explained the same expression, must die upon the Cross, in order that, by so dying, he might be made (like the brazen serpent), at once conspicuous and efficacious.

Thus far, we merely follow the analogy taught us by our Redeemer. . We cannot, therefore, help asking, in what manner our Saviour’s dying on the Cross corresponds to the lifting up of the serpent ; in other words, by what kind of influence, this last great act of our Lord’s humiliation engages the eye of the mind, and effects the spiritual reinstatement of the inner man ? These consequences of our Saviour’s death are clearly intimated in the parallel which he points out ; and that intimation enjoins, as well as encourages us, to examine the full import of his meaning.

The saying of our Lord, already adverted to, that, when lifted up on the Cross, he should draw all men unto him, goes a certain length in explaining the passage before us. To make an object *conspicuous*, implies that it is meant to be *attractive*. The design of the brazen serpent ensures this result, from man’s natural tendency to seek deliverance from corporal calamity. In the spiritual instance, it was necessary that the means of healing should be such as, by its character, to command attention ; to force inquiry

for what purpose such a provision was made ; and to call into action those sensibilities of mind and heart, which, in proportion to their activity, and according to the direction which they take, are the elements of character, and the springs of conduct.

For these purposes, what expedient could have been conceived, so naturally suitable as that provided in the crucifixion of God incarnate ? Such a transaction, once accomplished, must for ever stand conspicuous above all other transactions that ever had occurred, or could take place ; and, while human nature should exist, must more powerfully engage, and more deeply impress the mind and heart, than any other object that could ever occupy the thoughts of man. The more attentively this wonderful fact is considered, the higher estimate must we make of its mental and moral influence. It is, in truth, before the power of the Cross, that kings have bowed down, and empires have submitted themselves ; that idols have fallen, like Dagon before the ark ; and spirits of darkness have forsaken their long-usurped dominion. It would be impossible to conceive any other image more likely, even on natural principles, to become the central object of religious regard ; or better fitted, when once adverted to, to take an indissoluble hold of human habits and feelings. Doubtless, these are consulted in every feature of the Divine economy. But the death of Christ is the master-piece of omniscient skill, which operates through the widest sphere, and with every necessary variety of effect ; awing the care-

less, softening the obdurate, humbling the proud, giving tenderness to virtue, elevation to piety, intensity to devotion, perfection to purity: in a word, cementing the visible Church by its resistless attraction; and quickening the invisible Church by its omnipotent energy.

The effect upon the visible Church,—the manner in which the Redeemer, as “lifted up from the earth,” has brought and kept nations and empires under his external sway, would be an interesting inquiry, did not my special purpose confine me to that interior view of the subject, of which our Lord obviously speaks in the passage now before us. As, in comparing himself to the brazen serpent, he intimates an analogy between the calamity of the Israelites and ours; so he leads us to infer some sort of resemblance between the deliverance to be effected in our souls and that which the Israelites experienced in their bodies. Were it asked, in what manner the brazen serpent contributed to the cure of the Israelites? we must answer, by the mere appointment of God; who can, as he sees good, make any thing, however weak in itself, the vehicle of his omnipotent influence: but a moment’s reflection will lead us to make a different estimate of the glorious anti-type. The brazen serpent was but the passive medium of the power which healed the body: the crucified Redeemer is, in himself, the living fountain of that energy which heals the mind and heart. The antidote, thus provided for the poison of sin, combines, with the omnipotence of Deity, all that is either mentally engaging, or morally

impressive ; all that, according to the laws of human nature, creates interest, excites sympathy, animates principle, or awakens affection. The character of the man Christ Jesus, and the scenes through which he passes, are fitted to these purposes, in a manner never equalled in fact, and not to be exceeded in imagination. When Deity, therefore, united itself with these visible excellences, as if to modify its omnipotence into suitable medicine for the diseased spirit of man, an effect is ensured, a redintegration of spiritual life and health, of more than primeval purity, and more than paradisiacal happiness, is provided for, which satisfies, no less than it astonishes, the mind ; which as naturally delights, as it supernaturally disenthral, the heart.

The fitness of the dying Saviour, according to the laws of our nature, to work sanatively on the mind and heart, will be best seen by adverting to the nature of our spiritual malady. We are the victims of a threefold mental insanity, the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. These elements of moral misery are naturally in us all. The degrees of prevalence are different in different persons ; but every bosom is the seat of one or more of these maddening influences, until freed by something infinitely above its own best exertions. Until then, who is not, either the slave of appetite, the votary of the world, or the idolater of self ? And what means have ever been found, in the best maxims of philosophy, or in the severest rules of moral discipline, for uniformly repressing the symptoms, much less for effectually

removing the source, of these innate, and, therefore, inevitable calamities ?

To be insensible of this misery, is the evidence only of its more entire ascendancy. The mind, in proportion as it is morally awakened, groans under this degrading and lacerating bondage ; and would, if possible, flee from itself, to escape the inward hell of galled conscience, tortured pride, frantic passions, and headlong propensities. These, even in the view of enlightened heathens, were the essence of human wretchedness ; and to find a remedy for this complicated disease, was the real object of the honest, and the professed object of all ; but it was pursued without hope : all that they aspired to was some little palliation ; of deliverance, they despaired.

What, then, would a revelation from heaven have availed, if it had not contained some infallible resource against this radical evil ? What happiness could we have derived from the fullest security against an external hell, if there had not been effectual provision for quenching the hell within ? What would peace, on God's part, be to us, if there were not adequate means of rescuing us from that carnal mind which is enmity against God ? This internal cure, then, is the great achievement of the sufferings of the Cross. We *can* shew, that the object is thus effectually provided for ; and we cannot conceive how it could have been provided for otherwise. God incarnate, on the Cross, was as much the opposite of man's moral corruption, as the highest heaven is of the lowest hell. Deity, in our nature, by thus submitting to all from which

human feeling shrinks, and by making himself the contrast of all that human corruption relishes and loves, has, indeed, bruised the serpent's head; has crushed the root of moral misery in the mind and heart, with the whole weight of Deity; adjusted, as it were, to its purpose by the exquisite humanity, which an ineffable union made the instrument of its action, and the vehicle of its omnipotence.

This act, once done, retains imperishable efficacy. The Divine Agent is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The heights and depths, therefore, of the transaction on the Cross, the exquisite adaptation to all that is weak in man, the infinite contrariety to all that is earthly, sensual, or devilish, in him, are as unimpaired and energetic as they were in the moment of accomplishment. Consequently, the idea of what passed upon the Cross, is not a mere image, but an apprehension of an immutable reality; a reality, not only fitted above every other to fill the mind's eye, but to touch every spring, to penetrate every recess, and rivet every affection of the heart; and thus, to effect at once, even by a single thought, if only conceived with a strength and warmth adequate to the object, what all study of moral principles, all application to moral rule, in such a creature as man, could not, through eternity, have accomplished.

If I should here be supposed to assert too much, let the nature of the case be considered. Let us imagine the most enslaved voluptuary, or the blindest votary of what the world calls honour, in their most frenzied moments; and let us con-

ceive them suddenly to see the heavens opened, and at once to behold the scene of which prophecy assures us,—the great white throne, and Him who sitteth thereon, before whose face the earth and the heavens flee away. Could the madness of either withstand this sight? Would not a chill of horror freeze the inmost soul, and banish every thought of that which, a few moments before, had engrossed the whole man? Let us, then, suppose a mental apprehension as strong as the bodily view just supposed, of the same great Being voluntarily dying on the Cross; by that act, putting all pride, and sensuality, and worldliness, to an open shame; and shewing, by what he then did to subdue them, the doom to be looked for, at his second coming, by their willing votaries;—let us, I say, suppose this thought so impressed as to be felt like a reality; and would not such an impression have in it, in proportion to the degree of feeling, the same irresistible effect as the actual sight of the last judgment; with the sole difference of the unmixed terror of the one scene, and the unparalleled tenderness of the other? It is obvious, that the final scene would overwhelm the firmest mind; it is equally certain, that the suffering scene must either subdue the heart, or be viewed as the devils viewed its actual transaction.

Let me not be supposed to mean, that the mere thought of that glorious object would produce any solid effect. I ascribe efficacy to that species of apprehension only, which virtually realises the thing apprehended. It is beyond the power of man to give himself, at pleasure, any

such apprehension : but he who formed the human mind can give, to any image, the degree of impressiveness which he sees good ; or rather, he can give to the human mind and heart, a capacity of being impressed, a disposition to be interested, by what it contemplates. That this divine effect is to be looked for, and reckoned upon, in the case before us, follows, from all that is said in the New Testament respecting those permanent influences of the Holy Spirit, which have been already dwelt upon ; there being no conceivable instance in which the mysterious energy of that Divine Agent could be so suitably employed, as in making the Cross and Passion of the Incarnate Word, adequately answer its noblest and most necessary purpose.

Every Catholic Christian acknowledges the necessity of the Holy Spirit's operation upon the mind and heart. But it may not be adverted to, that the life and light, thus communicated, give strictly no more than a capacity of being impressed ; and therefore suppose, not supersede, the means of impressing. In the spiritual, as in the natural life, we are animated that we may feel ; we are enlightened that we may see ; and results follow, not merely in proportion to our vital and visual powers, but, also, in proportion to the objects on which those powers are employed : we see in vain, if there be nothing to contemplate ; we are animated to no purpose, if our faculties be not usefully and adequately occupied. How admirable, then, in this view, is the provision made, in God incarnate, for every exigence of the

reanimated mind. The seed of spiritual life does not exclude the need of spiritual medicine, and it implies the need of spiritual food. It is in the former view, that the passage under our consideration represents him. Omnipotence, acting through the brazen serpent, was medicine to the wounded Israelites. Omnipotence, acting through the inexpressibly nobler medium of Christ's human nature, is medicine to our diseased souls. The Israelites would have speedily perished, if the power of God had not been present to heal them; and our souls, though spiritually reanimated, could not retain the life which they had received, if there were not means of counteracting and subduing those internal corruptions, by which the nobler tendencies of "man, new made," still continued to be impeded, and without adequate assistance, would again be speedily overborne.

It has been already seen, that the spiritual apprehension of Christ crucified is the infallible antidote to our strongest and most subtle corruptions. We may, therefore, dare to conclude, that the blessed Spirit himself works, as it were, in subservience to this infinitely wise provision; and effects his purpose by fitting the mind and heart for applying the medicine so wonderfully adapted to the maladies of human nature. To look, therefore, to the dying Saviour, as the wounded Israelites to the brazen serpent, is the prime concern of every rational spirit from the first moment of spiritual animation.

Thus, and thus only, will the risings of sensuality, worldliness, and pride, be stifled in their birth.

The first adequate impression of this object so crushes the root of moral evil within us, as to ensure its gradual suppression, and final extirpation, if only we faithfully adhere to the means of our deliverance. We cannot be overcome of evil, while we attach ourselves to the resistless principle of its destruction. Such a principle exists, supremely and exclusively, in the dying Saviour;—at all times, the Sun of Righteousness, to quicken, cherish, and ripen, every seed and growth of virtue. The rays of this sun become, as it were, concentrated in the transaction on the cross; for the purpose of consuming those corruptions of our nature, which never would have yielded to any less powerful influence. To bring our minds and hearts, therefore, within this influence; or, rather, to ask, above all things, from the Father of lights, that he would make us feel, first, the necessity, and then, the efficacy, of this medicine of the soul, is our great concern as Christians; and the pursuit, in proportion to which, all other pursuits will succeed, or fail. It cannot be, that such a provision should be either superfluous or ineffectual: without recourse to the crucified Redeemer, there can be no deliverance; in faithfully recurring to him, there can be no disappointment. We are taught this truth, not only by the passage of Scripture now before us, but by a concurrence of passages, too numerous to be adduced. We are taught it, even by the reason of the case. The depth of the disease shews the need of an adequate remedy; and the great remedial expedient evidently combines the most perfect moral

influence with omnipotent energy. To what conclusion, then, can we come, but that the extent of the work corresponds to the depth of the want ; that the extremity of the provision is divinely fitted to meet the extremity of the exigence ; and that the deadly disease of sin finds its sole, but infallible antidote, in the spiritual apprehension of the suffering Saviour ?

I cannot quit this point without observing, that the spiritual efficacy of the death of Christ upon the minds and hearts of those who are brought within its influence, is repeatedly asserted by St. Paul, as if it were the chief object, and highest blessing, of the Gospel. Thus, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, he declares Christ crucified, as preached by him and his fellow-Apostles, to be the power of God ; that is, the divinely prepared instrument of Omnipotence for rescuing man from spiritual thralldom ; an idea strictly the same with the view which he gives of the Gospel in the commencement of the Epistle to the Romans, that it is the power of God unto salvation. To be saved by power, is to be delivered from some opposite power, or from our own weakness. To us the power of God is necessary for both purposes. To say, therefore, that Christ crucified is this power, is equivalent to declaring, that, in Christ crucified, alone, can we find deliverance from our corruption, and support for our infirmities. St. Paul expresses the same idea, in the strongest manner, when he tells the Galatians, that he was crucified with Christ ; and that, in consequence of his being so, he himself did not so much live, as

Christ lived in him; that is, his inner man was so impressed with the fact, and so imbued with the spirit, of Christ crucified, as to be raised above all animal passions, and earthly pursuits; and to value and relish those moral glories only, which shone with matchless effulgence in the dying Redeemer; and as this was to the Apostle the life of life—solicitude to grow in this life was, first and last, the ruling appetite of his soul. To know Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, so as to be spiritually conformed to his death, was as much the ambition of the aged Apostle, as it had been the anxiety of the newly awakened convert.

But this, in truth, was St. Paul's Christianity: it was the test he urged upon others. "If ye be risen with Christ," says he to the Colossians, "seek those things which are above: set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, (dead to sin, through the influence of Christ's death on their minds and hearts), and your life (that new and spiritual energy which they derived from the living Saviour, as members from the head) is hid (as to its source and principle) with Christ, in God," like the spring of that mystical river of the water of life which flowed forth from the throne of God, and of the Lamb. And to this same centre do his thoughts concerning himself, equally, return. His naturally ardent mind required some ruling object to which he might attach himself with all his powers; and this object proves to be no other than the cross of Christ, as the means through which the world was

crucified to him, and he to the world. Thus, as he intimates in the next words, a new creation had been effected in him; and, that he might induce others to pursue the same object by the same means, he breathes forth, in behalf of all who do so, as energetic a benediction, as could be expressed in language:—"as many as walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

On the ground of these express and powerful declarations, I cannot but regard St. Paul, as viewing our Saviour's death in the same light, of a medicine for the soul, and an antidote to the poison of sin, in which, under guidance of our Lord's intimation, I have been led to place it. It was, indeed, not to be supposed, that any dissonance could subsist between our Redeemer and the divinely appointed teacher of the Gentiles; but it is inexpressibly satisfactory to find the most probable sense of our Lord's words, not only recognised by this great Apostle, but expanded and dwelt upon, as a truth of the most vital moment; and above which, in the Gospel dispensation, no other truth could have place.

But it must be remembered, that there was another instance, beside that just considered, in which our Lord has largely taught us the inward and spiritual purpose of his death. As, in the conversation with Nicodemus, his dying on the cross makes him the effectual medicine of our diseased and dying souls; so, on the latter occasion, in his discourse to the men of Capernaum, he becomes, through his death, that true sustenance of the

inner man: "I am the living bread," says he, "which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." And, again, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you; for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

Between the two figures, of medicine, and food, there is a natural correspondence. Man, as diseased, needed the one; as restored to life, he required the other. When, therefore, the Supreme Good condescended to accommodate itself to man's spiritual exigencies, it was indispensable that provision should be made, first, for spiritual restoration, and then for spiritual advancement. We accordingly learn from our Lord himself, that by dying on the cross he has accomplished both purposes; and, by the same act of consummate beneficence, rescues our souls from spiritual death, and nourishes them to life eternal.

It is evident, that they only who have derived spiritual life from the dying Saviour, can receive or desire the spiritual nourishment which he communicates. The mind, healed of the deadly wound which reigning sin had inflicted, begins to exert its natural tendencies, and will feel an appetite for the bread which came down from heaven; it will be solicitous for more and more of that influence of Christ crucified, which it has already felt to be, not only its medicine, but its strength. The inner man, in proportion to the soundness of its recovery, feels that it has still much to be freed from, and

much to acquire. It is conscious of tendencies to be restrained, liabilities to be guarded, faults to be corrected, and defects to be supplied. But all appears to be provided for in that one idea ; “ Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”

The comprehensiveness of this expression is unbounded : the mind of Christ is wisdom, virtue, peace, superiority to frailty, victory over the world, filial intercourse with God, brightening anticipation of heaven : nothing can be named, pertaining to the spiritual life, in its being or its perfection, which the mind which was in Christ Jesus does not essentially embrace. To seek this sum of blessedness, therefore, by every natural and supernatural means, must be, in our Lord’s sense, to eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and to drink his blood ; for thus, only, could the assertion of our Redeemer be accomplished,—“ He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” The admitted reference of this discourse to the Eucharist, does not merely accord with, but require, an inward and spiritual meaning. For what, asks St. Paul, is the Lord’s Supper, but the communion of the body and blood of Christ ? that is, what but the divinely instituted ordinance, whereby the eating of the flesh of Christ, and the drinking of his blood, enjoined by himself, are most effectually performed through the certain concurrence of his own presence and power ? In this highest act of our religion, we come to our Redeemer, in order that he may give us, what, without his giving us, we never could receive ; namely, the quickening,

purifying, strengthening, and refreshing influences of himself: the influences both of the dying and of the living Saviour; the grace, which mortifies sin, and which animates virtue; the wisdom, which enlightens the mind; the attraction, which elevates the heart: such are the blessings which the few but significant words of Holy Scripture teach Christians to expect in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Such was the view with which the ancient church clung to this mystery, as the supernatural conduit of spiritual strength and salvation; and such is the benefit, of which our own church assures all communicants who approach the sacramental altar with suitable qualifications. For then, she says, “we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood; then, we dwell in Christ and Christ in us: we are one with Christ, and Christ with us.”

If there be any who regard the sacrament of the Lord's Supper merely as a respectful ceremony, or religious commemoration, they either cannot apply to it what is said in the 6th of St. John, or they enervate our Lord's powerful words by the application. The figurative expressions, of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, have no rational meaning when referred to the external rite separately from the internal grace of the sacrament. But when understood of the grace, which the Eucharist is intended to convey, and of the sacrament itself, as the divinely appointed vehicle of that grace, those deep words are truly what our Lord calls them,—“spirit and life.” In so applying them, justice is done, at once to the words

and to the ordinance of Christ. The words describe blessings commensurate to our spiritual wants; and the ordinance contains a provision for conferring those blessings divinely adapted to our animal and moral weakness. Nothing short of that spiritual life, and health, and nutriment, which our Lord has here promised, could meet the exigencies of our inner man: and to sustain our hope of that promise being fulfilled, such a method of fulfilment was necessary, as would warrant our hopes by its supernatural efficacy, and interest our feelings by its accommodation to our capacities. As, therefore, the healing virtue of Christ crucified—divinely communicated to the dying spirit of man—restores spiritual life, and gives the capacity of growing in grace, and in the knowledge and love of God; so, by the continued application of mind and heart to the same divine object, every grace is strengthened, every weakness is relieved, every want is supplied. In the spiritual life, the source of animation must, in the nature of things, be also the source of sustenance. The power which, in the first instance, subdues evil propensities, and inspires pure and happy dispositions, is, in reason, to be relied upon for repressing any fresh rising of evil, and for cherishing the yet imperfect principles of goodness. If, therefore, the first affectionate apprehension of Christ crucified destroyed the prevalence of sin, and communicated to the inner man a spiritual and heavenly tendency, till then unfelt, and unconceived,—continual recurrence to the same infinite object must, more and more, advance what

has been thus happily begun : and increased liveliness of apprehension will, by natural consequence, imply more absolute deliverance from corruption, and more complete establishment in goodness.

That these assertions are not gratuitous, may be proved to impartial reason. The affectionate apprehension of God is the life of virtue, throughout the intelligent universe. Immortal spirits are good and happy, so far only as they are drawn, with increasing ardour, towards the infinite fountain of goodness and happiness. As they increase in knowledge and love, they grow proportionally in resemblance and enjoyment : and they feel that they shall thus grow for ever, because their model is infinite, and their means of improvement inexhaustible. When, therefore, this life and joy of the universe, has, as it were, moulded its perfections into the form of human excellence,—in order that it might, at once, reach our lowest depth, fill our utmost capacity, and communicate to us, not only radically, but in kind, every ingredient of worth and happiness,—can we spiritually live, or grow, otherwise than by adhering to this root, and uniting ourselves to this fulness ?

Would we be wise ? in Christ crucified, is truth. There is not a deceit of the world, the flesh, or the devil, which is not here detected. The madness of pride, the folly of vanity, the infatuation of worldly reckonings and hope, appear what they are, when seen in the light of Christ's victorious patience, and unqualified meekness. In truth there is not a moral evil which has not its infallible antidote ;

nor any moral virtue which has not its spring and sustenance in Jesus Christ, and him crucified. To apprehend HIM, with every faculty of the mind, and with every affection of the heart, and to grow daily in that apprehension, is to emerge from every thing that enthrals, to surmount all that could contaminate. The affectionate apprehension of Christ crucified, cannot but conform us more and more to his spirit; and to be conformed to his spirit, is to participate in his conquest: by hating what Christ hated, and loving what Christ loved, we not only die with him unto sin, but rise again with him unto righteousness; and, in the growth of this conformity, we ascend with him, more and more, into the heavens; and enter, with increasing depth and fulness, into the foretaste of that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

If it should be asked, Why the death of Christ is specially the spring of spiritual influence? the answer is, because in that point, all the moral glories of the Incarnate Word are concentrated. His active virtues were not suspended, but perfected, by his sufferings. He disclosed new excellencies, in meekly bearing all that rancour could inflict, or innocence endure; but still it was goodness assuming a more exquisite and more resistless form, because every pain he suffered, was voluntarily submitted to; and, at each moment, an act of his will would have reduced his persecutors, and the earth which supported them, to their original nothing. In proportion, therefore, as the Redeemer sank on the scale of humiliation, his moral glories grew more and more effulgent, until pa-

tience had its perfect work in him, and virtue, in human form, could reach no greater height. The death of Christ, therefore, as comprehending and consummating all the perfections of his character; as uniting, in one compendious point, all the influences of his person, and his offices of Immanuel, God with us, Prophet, Priest, and King, is most fitly placed before us as the well of life, from whence we are to derive both the medicine and the sustenance of our immortal spirits; and of which, the more deeply we partake, the more richly shall we be replenished with inward health and undelusive joy; with all that insures and anticipates the pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore.

To the death of Christ, therefore, *both* the Christian sacraments have reference. Through the sacrament of baptism, Christians are said to be buried with Christ, in order that, being spiritually conformed to him, in the likeness of his death, they may also participate in the influences of his resurrection. And the sacrament of the Eucharist is expressly instituted, to give us access to the crucified Saviour, as the appropriate food of our renovated minds and hearts. But in what manner, it may be asked, do the two sacraments subserve their respective purposes? Do they contribute to a merely rational, or are they instrumental to a divine result? Are the sacraments designed merely to assist and heighten the natural impressiveness of Christ's death on our minds? or are they the visible means, through which an invisible co-operation of Omnipotence is divinely provided for?

A mere purpose of impressing the mind, would hardly account for either of the sacramental institutions. Christianity is too firmly founded in fact, and too distinctly exhibited in historical records and characteristic exemplifications, to need the aid of mere symbolical ceremonies. What, it is natural to ask, could be added to our sense of duty as Christians, by the circumstance of initiatory ablution, or to our gratitude for Christ's death by commemorative eating of bread, and drinking of wine? The significancy of those acts is too arbitrary to imply natural impressiveness; the mind must give interest to them, rather than be interested by them: regarded, therefore, as mere ceremonies, they would be least beneficial when most needed. They would be disregarded by thoughtless or superficial Christians, and but coldly, however conscientiously respected, even by the devout. Our feelings do not move at our will; they rise and fall according to their own laws; and what would there be to raise feeling in a mere ceremonial observance? What would be seen in the Eucharistic rite which had not been far more distinctly contemplated in the Gospel history? What impressiveness in commemorative eating and drinking, which calm and close meditation would not equally contain? In a word, the rational dignity of Christianity would seem to be not heightened, but impaired, by an indispensable requisition of acts, so indifferent in their nature, and so limited in their efficacy.

But how different must be our estimate of the Christian sacraments, when considered as appointed

instruments of Omnipotent influence. So understood, they are clearly intelligible to our minds, and infinitely impressive on our hearts. They are elucidated, by parallel instances, in every stage of the Divine history; in which we seldom find the power of God exerted otherwise, than through some visible medium: the rod of Moses; the ark of the covenant; the mantle of Elijah; the tree of life, before the fall; and the touch, or breath, of our Divine Restorer; the clay, with which he anointed the eyes of the blind man; the oil, which he directed his disciples to apply to diseased bodies; all serve to strengthen the persuasion, that a stated exercise of supernatural power, for the highest purposes which could be accomplished on earth, would be provided for, by some sensible instrumentality; which, by shrouding the Divine power, should consult the weakness of man; and, by its intrinsic inefficacy, evince the agency which made it beneficial. In this view, therefore, the simplicity of the sacramental symbols, instead of lessening, increases the dignity of the observance. We see before us means, by which God alone can work, but such as it has pleased him usually to employ. We look beyond the means, to the omnipotent Agent, who conceals himself, as it were, behind those material veils. We see God himself, in his appointed ordinance; as the Israelites saw him in the cloud which rested on the tabernacle. We feel ourselves in the special presence of Deity; and we are impressed, as if we heard that awful voice, "Put off thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." To ap-

proach the sacrament of the Eucharist, thus persuaded of its efficacy, and with a heart athirst for the blessings to which it points, is, virtually, to pass the line between earth and heaven, and to draw in life eternal, from its living fountain. Nothing short of this is implied, in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper being a conduit of supernatural grace; and, when such an assurance is added to an adequate sense of our Redeemer's moral excellencies, what is wanting to complete our spiritual happiness? We cannot but be happy, if we possess the mind which was in Christ Jesus. We cannot fail of attaining this mind, when not only we seek resemblance to him, by studying his character, and endeavouring to copy his example, but when he himself sits for ever, as it were, on a visible mercy-seat, of his own divine institution, to meet that study, and crown those efforts, by his own supernatural influence, and vital communication.

By thus admitting this twofold knowledge of our Redeemer, the rational, and the supernatural,—the mental apprehension of his moral excellencies, and the internal reception of his communicated virtue,—we could not but verify the simplest statement of the Gospel. “The law,” says St. John, “was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” These two ideas, therefore, are the compendium of the evangelic dispensation. The single term, truth, comprehends every thing that we can intellectually know; but grace, expresses much more than knowledge, namely, communicated influence. The Apostle thus explains his own term: “Of his fulness,” says he, “have we

all received, and grace for grace." Though he had declared the Incarnate Word to be full both of grace and truth, he speaks of receiving the former only from his fulness; because, though our Saviour was the infinite mine of truth, not less than the inexhaustible fountain of grace, it was not by supernatural communication that truth was to be individually attained, but by a wise and adequate application of the rational powers. Grace is an exercise of Divine influence; truth, is the just idea of things, as they are in themselves, and as they relate to and affect each other: the former works upon us, the latter is apprehended by us. We can, in the one case, be nothing more than grateful receivers and faithful improvers; in the other case, we must ourselves contribute to our acquirement, by all the suitable means, of examination, comparison, and deduction. While, therefore, we can resort to our Redeemer for grace only, we must contemplate him in all his aspects; study him in every disclosure which he has made of his excellence; explore the hidden treasures of wisdom, which are in him, in order to the due apprehension of the truth which makes wise unto salvation.

Truth is of various kinds, physical, metaphysical, and moral. The two former kinds of truth are useful, but not indispensable. A man may be happy, though he knows nothing of either physical or metaphysical science; but acquaintance with moral truth is essential to our well-being. We cannot exist comfortably without its influence: we move with safety, only by its guidance. The Incarnate Word would, therefore, not be the Sun

of Righteousness, if he merely quickened us by his Spirit, and did not, also, illuminate us by his truth; but, in becoming to us, at once, the source of spiritual life, and the manifestation of moral truth, he supplies every want, and provides for every capacity, of our immortal nature. As spiritual beings, we live by knowledge, and love; by knowing the infinite truth, and loving the infinite good. We must, therefore, be instructed in that knowledge, as well as animated with that love: Christ is, therefore, full of grace and truth; of grace, that he may animate us; and of truth, that he may instruct us. We are animated by his grace, that we may be susceptible of his truth; and the more closely we study the truth which is in him, the more confidently may we look for fresh communications of grace, that we may be thereby enabled to carry our increasing knowledge into more perfect practice.

Such, then, being the provision made for us, in the first great act of our redemption; it was to be expected that suitable means would be prepared, as well for the communication of grace, as for the exhibition of truth. For this latter purpose, there could be nothing better, than the written word proceeding from inspiration, preserved by Providence, attested and elucidated by a chain of irrefragable facts extending through eighteen centuries. In this invaluable record, God Incarnate forms the chief feature: nor would it be possible to imagine a registry of fact, more admirably adapted to all the purposes of mental impression. Some other expedient, then, might naturally be looked for, corresponding as fitly to the conveyance of

Divine grace, as the Christian volume is fitted for exhibiting Divine truth.

The two sacraments, if rightly represented in the above remarks, constitute the exact provision required by the exigence in question. The fact of supernatural grace being once admitted, suitable means of conveyance cannot be wanting; and the more closely the aspect of the two Christian sacraments is examined, the more fully will their subserviency to the supernatural grace of the Gospel be acknowledged as a truth, and valued as a benefit. In this view, the reasonableness of their institution will be manifest; and there will be equally little need of making them appear interesting, or obligatory. The purpose for which they are employed, the agency of which they are, at once, the token and the veil, the influence which makes them efficacious, supersede injunction, and are instead of a thousand arguments. This holds good respecting both sacraments; but it eminently applies to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; because, while in Baptism we are initiated only once for all into the life of goodness, and never again repeat the solemnity; in the Lord's Supper, we are, on the contrary, to look for new supplies of grace, and heavenly benediction. "Our spiritual life," says St. Paul, "is hid with Christ in God;" the influence by which we spiritually live and grow, is, as to its fountain head, within the depths of Deity: in Incarnate God, it has come near to us; and in the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, it continually flows forth upon us. The communicable virtues of the Word made flesh, are permanently and perfectly bestowed. In a word,

all that we need to receive of Christ himself, as our everlasting life and strength, is provided for, and placed before us, in this well of salvation.

Such is the estimate we are necessarily led to make of the sacrament of the Eucharist, on the supposition of its being the visible pledge and means of the benefits enlarged upon in the 6th chapter of St. John. That it is, in point of fact, the pledge and means of those benefits, we learn with certainty, from the emphatical and comprehensive interrogation of St. Paul: "The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" The appeal thus made to a universally received truth, is more than equivalent to the strongest possible assertion: it implies, that the mystical efficacy of the Lord's Supper was amongst the most radical doctrines of Christianity; that it was a truth declared to all, and acquiesced in by all; that one and the same apprehension of this holy ordinance was settled in all Christian minds. We have, therefore, only to ask, What is this communion of the body and blood of Christ? can it mean any thing else, than a communication of those very influences, the value and necessity of which our Lord asserts in that remarkable discourse? All that he says, is resolvable into the communion of his body and blood: and this expression cannot be more intelligibly expanded, than in the language of our Lord, on that occasion. Whatever, then, are the communicable virtues ascribed by our Redeemer, to his flesh and to his blood, when he declared, that his flesh was meat

indeed, and his blood drink indeed ; and that who-soever should eat his flesh, and drink his blood, should live by him, and dwell in him ; must of necessity be implied in that communion of our Saviour's flesh and blood, of which, according to St. Paul, the eucharistic bread and cup are the divinely appointed instruments.

The sole question, therefore, which remains to be asked, is, In what manner does St. Paul suppose the efficacious influences of Christ's body and blood to be combined with the cup of blessing, and the broken bread ? On this point, some difference of opinion may be looked for, even among those who admit that supernatural grace is communicated, in the Eucharist, to worthy receivers. Such a blessing, some think, may be annexed to the act of receiving what Christ has commanded to be received, without supposing the material substances of bread and wine to be, in any sense, the actual vehicles of divine influence. But the language of St. Paul appears to convey a different idea : his words direct attention, not to the act, but to the elements ; and not to the elements, as eaten or drunk ; but to the cup, as blessed, and to the bread, as broken : as if, in the judgment of the Apostle, the elements, from the moment of their being solemnly set apart, were no longer to be regarded as common material substances, but as mysterious representatives of our Redeemer's body and blood, through which the faithful recipient effectually participates in the thing represented.

The objector to this conclusion is bound to shew, in what other sense the Apostle's language

can be consistently understood. In his mind, the communion of the body and blood of Christ must have implied a divinely beneficial influence, of which faithful Christians partook, in that holy ordinance. In asserting, therefore, the consecrated elements to be that communion, can the Apostle mean any thing else, than that those elements, blessed and broken, as the Lord appointed, become the means of conveying the communicable influences of his incarnation and sufferings?

They who deny that there are any such influences, must of necessity reduce the expressions of St. Paul to a mere rhetorical figure. But to those who believe our Redeemer to be the source of supernatural life and strength to his members, the import of the words now before us will not seem to admit of reasonable question.

In what manner divine energy can be conveyed to the mind of man, through a material medium, is certainly beyond human comprehension. But that divine touches may be given, by which human nature is raised above itself, and obtains powers of doing and suffering, which it could not have reached by any efforts of its own, is not only, in itself, a most comfortable persuasion, but a fact attested and exemplified by the entire current of Scripture. God, assuredly, needs no instrument; he speaks, and it is done: but a visible medium is suitable to our weakness; and, accordingly, the cup of blessing, and the broken bread, are made the conduits of influence, in compliance with our animal feelings. By mercy being so embodied, we, in the fullest sense, taste and see that the Lord is gracious.

That the elements are to be regarded as the vehicles of blessing, appears still farther, from the awful information in the latter part of the chapter, that the irreverent use of them is attended with malediction. This circumstance has ever been a mark of peculiar sanctity, in the object so guarded. The ark of the covenant, with which the Divine presence was mysteriously connected, had exactly the same tremendous fence; and, as he who touched the ark irreverently, died; so he who eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself: the curse being, as it appears, communicated to the profane, through the very symbol which is the vehicle of life and strength to the faithful.

The irreverence, we are told, arises, from “not discerning the Lord’s body.” This is, also, a remarkable expression. There was then present before them a body of our Lord, which it was a Christian duty to recognise, and a matter of extreme peril not to respect. What was this body? Not the mystical body, composed of those who believe in Christ. Not the glorified body: this was beyond the ken of creatures. It could, therefore, be no other, than Christ’s eucharistical body; his operative presence, as the incarnate and suffering Messiah, uniting itself with, and acting by and through, the consecrated symbols. To eat and drink these unworthily, was, not to discern the Lord’s body: the undiscerned body was, consequently, *in* the profaned symbols. In these it ought to have been discerned; and, from its not being so discerned, the symbols were eaten and drunk, without regard

to the power which had united itself with them ; and that power, so disregarded, coming, like the Shekinah into the temple of Dagon, communicated a maledictory influence, instead of a blessing.

Such I conceive to be the ideas which we are led to form in following, not forcing, the Apostle's line of thought. In this instance, we can ascertain his meaning, solely from the import of his expressions ; because there is no parallel passage by which his words on this occasion can be either limited or illustrated. It cannot, therefore, be said, that these few sentences are not sufficient to sustain an important doctrine, involving both faith and practice ; for, while it is undeniable that such a head of doctrine exists, it is equally certain, that we find it expressly treated of in no other part of the apostolic writings. We are, therefore, necessitated to rest in the view which this single passage places before us. However strong the expressions, we must receive them as they stand ; since we may be certain, that neither St. Paul, nor that Spirit under whose guidance he wrote, would, in a single word, exceed the truth of the case, when qualifying language was nowhere else to occur : and what was written, was written once and for ever.

On the whole, what higher could be said of the eucharistic bread and cup, than that they, the one as broken, the other as blessed, are the communion of the body and blood of Christ ? They obviously can be so, only as they are divine instruments of conveying what they represent ; nor, in reason, can they be *less* communicative of blessing, than they are of malediction. If he who

eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment,—that is, takes in a curse, with the sacred substances which he abuses,—by parity of reason, he who eats and drinks worthily, eats and drinks salvation; that is, takes in an ineffable blessing with the symbols which he receives according to their divinely appointed purpose. Such being the obvious import of the Apostle's statement, is not our acquiescence in it as wise, as our reliance upon it will be comfortable? Our Redeemer, in instituting the Eucharist, used words of such mysterious significancy, as to need an explanation; and in this passage of St. Paul, we have the only explanation found in the Christian volume. It will be our wisdom, therefore, to take the more earnest heed to the words which are spoken, lest at any time we should let them slip. Besides, taken in their obvious meaning, they are singularly “quick and powerful:” they notify a provision which leaves no spiritual want without its supply; no fear or weakness without its support and consolation. It may be said, Would not the hope be equally cheering, though the blessing were not conveyed through the elements, but merely concurred with the act? I need only answer, that of this matter, the Apostle who wrote, and the Spirit who dictated, were infinitely the best judges; and that, in distinctly specifying the consecrated cup as the communion of the blood, and the broken bread as the communion of the body, a connexion, which no man has a right to dissolve, is formed between the symbols and the communicated blessing. Not to cavil, therefore, but to rest unre-

servedly in what is spoken, is obligatory upon us as Christians, and becomes us as fallible beings.

But, besides, is it not suitable, that the solemnly instituted pledge of a blessing should be also the means of conveying that blessing? They, accordingly, who place our salvation chiefly in a change of our circumstances; in reversed condemnation, restored favour, and a title to an everlasting inheritance,—consider the sacrament of the Eucharist as the seal of those benefits; and suppose it to confer them on the qualified receiver, as the authentication of a deed ensures the grant of an estate. This supposition is reasonable, on such a view of evangelic blessings. But, if the crowning mercy of the Gospel be a communication of life and strength from Christ himself, it appears no less reasonable, that the visible pledge of the blessing should be made the stated medium of the communication. That the eucharistic symbols might the more naturally be so regarded, the chief aliments of animal man were chosen for the purpose:—bread, the principal strengthener of his frame; wine, the prompt reinvigorator of his exhausted spirits. Thus, He who commenced his divine undertaking by enshrining his glorious person within the substance of an animal body, continues his gracious work, by mysteriously uniting the supernatural sustenance of our immortal spirits with the most distinguished natural aliments of corporeal life. Thus there is an analogy in the primary and consequent parts of the evangelic design, which heightens the significancy both of our Lord's words in instituting, and

St. Paul's words in elucidating, the eucharistic ordinance.

There is, I have just said, an analogy in the primary and consequent parts of the design ; and we accordingly find a similar mystery in the one and in the other. It is as difficult to conceive how Deity united itself with a human person, and dwelt in an animal body, as to explain how the communications of our Saviour's spiritual influences can be made through the substances of bread and wine. But if we admit the former mystery, we cannot consistently deny the possibility of the latter. We are the more bound to modest submissiveness of mind, because we cannot presume to limit the nature of the influences meant to be conveyed. They are intended to sanctify our soul, and even our body, as well as our rational mind. "The very God of peace," says the Apostle to the Thessalonians, "sanctify you wholly ;" that is, as he immediately explains it, the spirit, the soul, and the body : a distinction held by the Platonic school ; but, as appears by this remarkable passage, sanctioned by St. Paul. It lies not with us to define the influences which may be necessary for so extensive a purpose. Of this one thing we are sure, that the omnipotence, as well as the wisdom and the goodness of God, concurs in the work ; and, as it is the prerogative of Omnipotence to work upon physical nature as it sees good ; so, at its pleasure, it uses whatever instrument it pleases ; or acts by its own energy without any instrument at all.

Is it not evident, then, that the communion of

the body and blood of Christ, as a chief provision for our sanctification, must, of necessity, include every influence requisite for that purpose; and that, as the end in view can be effected only by the energy of Omnipotence, that energy may be relied upon, as co-operating in the transaction? If, then, the cup of blessing, and the broken bread, be the divine medium of that communion, does it not follow, that these symbols, however weak and simple in themselves, were regarded by St. Paul, as, through divine condescension, the vehicles of omnipotent virtue; the virtue of Christ's divine and human nature, of his life and of his death; the omnipotence which alone is adequately operative on our spirit, our soul, and our body?

I have thus endeavoured, impartially and reverently, to educe the weighty meaning of this remarkable passage. By placing before us ideas so profound and comprehensive, the Apostle necessitates us to seek an interior sense proportioned to the terms which he uses. To discover that sense, has been my object; and I seem to myself to have proposed nothing which the text does not convey, either expressly, or by implication. To stretch the language of the Apostle beyond its just import, would be unwarrantable and dangerous. On the other hand, not to trace it to its full extent, would be a dishonour to the word of inspiration, and an injury to ourselves. Had a frigid and jejune interpretation been intended, the omniscient Spirit could have easily ensured his own purpose by obvious and strictly limited expressions. But he does not so when he tells, through the pen of

St. Paul, that the cup of blessing is the communion of the blood, and the broken bread, the communion of the body, of Christ. On the contrary, he expresses, what must, in common reason, be understood mysteriously and sublimely; and with an estimate of the symbols thus designated, as high as can be ascribed to matters, which, though ineffably distinguished, are still merely representative and instrumental.

To invest the eucharistic symbols with this mysterious honour on any other authority than that of Holy Scripture, would be not only fanciful, but presumptuous. But nothing could be more unreasonable than to repel the interesting thought of supernatural efficiency in the elements, when distinctly intimated by the unerring Spirit. No idea strikes, or occupies, the mind and heart, like that of the special presence and operation of God: it is an apprehension, of all others, the most awful to natural feeling,—the most animating to the devout heart.

God, we know, fills immensity. There is not a point in infinite space where the Divine Being is not essentially present. But this thought, solely or chiefly dwelt upon, astonishes much more than it interests the mind. The greatness of the Almighty, is, indeed, a necessary basis of our religious apprehensions; but it is his goodness which attracts and engages the heart. He would not be God if he were not boundless in his majesty; he would not be *our* God if he were not minute, as well as gracious, in his condescension. Human feeling, accordingly, has been always incomparably

more excited by any apprehension of the special presence, than by the fullest conviction of the ubiquity, of God. This latter excites admiration ; but it is God noticing us, approaching us, acting in our behalf, and giving us access to himself, that can alone attach or animate the affections. If this inspiriting apprehension of Deity be wanting, the more extended our view of the divine essence, we are but the more lost in inconceivable vastness.

God's gracious revelation of himself, gave the first relief from this perplexity of soul. It was inexpressible consolation to be assured, that he who fills the universe is each individual's benefactor and friend. But God did not judge this provision for man's comfort to be commensurate to his nature ; he knew what was in man ; and this knowledge guided his goodness. Therefore, to numberless miraculous proofs of his presence he added the appointment of a temple, wherein his glory should mysteriously reside ; where he might be regarded as in constant readiness to hear his people's prayers and meet their wishes ; and from whence, gracious influences were continually to issue on the minds and hearts, the persons and circumstances, of that distinguished nation.

The Hill of Zion was, henceforth, the common centre and loved resting-place of devout minds and hearts : it was, to God's people, paradise restored ; with the tree of life, once more, in the midst of the garden : it was heaven uniting itself to earth ; God, whom the heaven of heavens could not contain, dwelling personally, like a father with his family, in the midst of his favoured people ; his omni-

science watching over them; his omnipotence protecting them; and his goodness flowing forth upon them, gently as that emblematic stream of Siloa, yet unbounded in its results, except so far as it was limited by the capacity of the receiver. Of the sentiments inspired by this privilege, the scriptures of the Old Testament are full; and it is evident, that, where natural or moral feeling was not wanting, nothing could exceed the attraction, the interest, the delight, and the endearment, which grew up in individuals, spread through capable bosoms, and were always, with some happy effect, transmitted to posterity.

Was this a childish feeling excited by beggarly elements which were to endure but for a time? or was it a consulting of human nature itself,—a wise and gracious accommodation to wants and capacities inherent in man, and unalterable by times or circumstances? This latter conclusion seems pressed upon us by an evidence which supersedes all reasoning; namely, the solicitude of our Redeemer for the preservation of this particular feeling, when every thing merely Jewish was on the verge of abolition. Though the original ark of the covenant, which struck its violators with disease or death, had long since perished, our Saviour's love for the temple, in his childhood, and zeal for its honour, in his age, give proof, that God was, even then, specially present in his sanctuary; and that reverence for the place so distinguished, was not a superstitious weakness, but a just and natural homage, which it was necessary to offer, and impious to neglect;—yet the place itself, thus

vindicated by the only impassioned acts of our Saviour's life, was to be shortly swept from the earth, by that predicted desolation which was to come in as a flood. Was it, then, for the sake of the temple, only, that Divine wisdom gave so forcible a lesson? Was nothing ever after to exist, in which the sentiment, so cherished, should find an adequate object; and through which the rightly disposed heart might enjoy the consolation which the Jews had derived from the local presence of Jehovah? Had such been the Divine will, can we suppose that Divinity Incarnate would have either shewn concern, or expressed reproof? or, if expressed, would it not have been animadversion on what was past correction, rather than prompt and zealous reformation of the evil? Must we not, then, conclude, that the reverence of holy things, which our Lord so imperatively required, and so impressively taught, was still to be, in some way or other, called into exercise; by consequence, some *object* of this respect, of the same general nature with the temple, and similarly serving as a medium of approach to God, and of communications from God, was to have its proportioned place and effect in the dispensation which was just then commencing?

In what instance, then, it is natural to inquire, has our Redeemer given to his mystical Israel a like object of veneration, and a like provision for delight and comfort? Such an idea can be realised only in something which bears relation to our Redeemer himself. In him, the Godhead, which deigned to inhabit the ancient temple, has united

itself far more closely to us, by coming within the sphere of our nature. The temple, made with hands, was thus superseded by a living sanctuary:—the human person, formed for the fit inhabitation of the Everlasting Word, by the Omnipotent Spirit, within the womb of the Virgin. We are thus instructed by our Redeemer himself; who, at the very moment of his enjoining veneration for the temple, distinctly intimated, that his body was its antitype. When asked for a miraculous sign to sanction the authority he assumed, his answer was, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews did not understand him. But the beloved Apostle has expressly added, “He spake of the temple of his body.” Here, therefore, was a temple to which all honour due to the former temple was, henceforth, to be transferred; since, whatever excellence was *there* in commencement, was *here* in consummation.

To our Redeemer’s natural person we can now pay no other reverence than that of the mind and heart. Having passed into the heavens, he sits for ever on the right hand of the Majesty on high. But we must not forget, that he did not more expressly call his body a temple, than he afterwards called the eucharistic bread his body. In calling his body a temple, he declared it to be the habitation of Deity. In calling the bread his body, he could not mean less than that it was his representative body; a token, in which, according to St. Paul, the once humiliated, but now glorified, body of the Lord, was to be discerned; that is, recognised and honoured by his church; and by

eating of which, the spirit and power of him, whom it represented, should be communicated to all his living members. In this view, then, can there be a doubt, that all the ancient honour of the Jewish temple, yea, and far greater honour than could have been ascribed to that temple, has devolved upon, and is to be attributed to, the eucharistic symbols,—to the bread, when broken, and to the cup, when blessed? I conceive this conclusion to be inevitable. The principle itself, of reverencing external objects on account of the sacred thing with which they are combined, is settled by the word and act of Infinite wisdom, in the instance of the ancient temple. But the relative sanctity of the eucharistic symbols and celebration is, indisputably, much higher than the relative sanctity of the temple; inasmuch as the representative body of Incarnate Deity is, necessarily, a nobler and more exalted thing, than the structure in which he specially manifested himself before he became incarnate. There is, obviously, a greater nearness of relation in the representative body and blood, than in the most distinguished place of special manifestation. The general claim to reverence, in such cases, being, therefore, established, the degree of reverence must, of course, be settled by circumstances; and who can dispute, that, on the joint ground of our Lord's words, and those of St. Paul, the balance of circumstances is incomparably on the side of the Eucharist?

If the reason of the case did not bring us to this conclusion, it would be forced upon us by those awful words of St. Paul, in the sequel of his

discourse : “ He that eateth the bread, or drinketh the cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” This infinitely exceeds the utmost which could have been said respecting the temple, the sanctuary, or even the mysterious ark. It indicates a connexion between the interior mystery of the Lord’s Supper and the external sign, approaching as nearly to virtual identity as, in the nature of things, is possible. There is nothing in these words, there can be nothing in any words of Holy Scripture, which can set reason and faith at variance ; nothing which can require our belief of an absurdity. But it will be the contrary to absurdity, to give to the expressions just quoted the profoundest and sublimest sense which our mind is capable of conceiving. No stretch of human thought could ascribe more to the eucharistic bread and cup, than by declaring, that he, who receives them as common things, who treats them, as the buyers and sellers, and money-changers treated the temple, is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

The deepest guilt which was ever incurred on earth, followed from those terrible words, and the yet more terrible act to which they referred,—“ His blood be upon us, and upon our children.” We see the miserable prayer to this day, in unabated fulfilment ; yet with this guilt it is that St. Paul equals the crime of profane communicants : “ He that eateth the bread, or drinketh the cup of the Lord, unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of this Lord.” Malediction could proceed no farther : yet it cannot be greater than it is just ;

and that justice *must* arise from the transcendent sanctity of the object. The bread and the cup must, in some exalted and supernatural sense, be the body and blood of the Lord; otherwise, to treat this bread and cup with disrespect, would not be the violation of the Lord's body and blood. But if such be the sanctity of the consecrated elements, and such the penalty of profaning them, it is not enough not to profane them, we must reverently recognise their unparalleled designation. The duty follows from the crime; what we must not treat as common, we must treat with reverence: the terms are, in fact, convertible; not to treat any thing as common, is to treat it with reverence; and if we do not treat it with reverence, we treat it as common.

But the Apostle has superseded reasoning, by clearly notifying the kind of reverence which is, in this case, required from us. In telling us, that they who eat and drink unworthily discern not the Lord's body, he necessarily implies, that discernment of the Lord's body, in the Eucharist, is the essential feeling in this sacred celebration. If, then, we only suffer our minds to rest on this idea, shall we not perceive, that every impression of relative sanctity felt by holy men of old, and every association of thought through which a consecrated object ever, in any instance, became interesting or awful, are but inferior semblances of the apprehensions and the feelings, claimed by the object, and comprehended in the discernment, spoken of by the Apostle in this passage?

The assurance of God's special presence in the

temple at Jerusalem, was, with infinite reason, to the pious Jew, every thing that could fill the mind, or rivet the heart : it was an unutterable and inexhaustible source of tenderness, elevation, and joy. Yet this apprehension was obscure and unsatisfactory, compared with the equally distinct and effulgent brightness of God manifest in the flesh. Every preceding manifestation of Deity, was, to the incarnate glory of the only-begotten of the Father, as the advances of the dawn, to the risen sun.

If we, then, are warranted to believe, that He, who thus graciously took our nature upon him, and tabernacled among us, is, as really as ever, Emmanuel, God with us ; that, in a solemnity instituted by himself for this express purpose, he continually revisits us, in all the majesty of his divine, and in all the meekness of his human nature ; to excite us by the certainty of his special presence ; to reinvigorate us by his influence ; to draw us upward by his attraction ; in a word, to communicate his very self to us, and receive, in return, the homage of our hearts,—in this ineffable provision for our happiness, have we not incomparably more than the Jews possessed in their justly loved and venerated temple ? Have we not an object, on which it is impossible to dwell, to which it is impossible to advert, without impressions, affections, and associations, of the liveliest, tenderest, most exalted kind of which our nature is capable ; the most influential on temper and conduct ; the most replete with mental satisfaction, and joy of heart ?

Are we justified in this conclusion by the pass-

ages of Holy Scripture which have been adduced ? This is the only remaining question. Let us, then, attend to the concurrent representation of St. Paul, and of our Redeemer himself. If, according to the former, the Lord's body is to be *discerned* in the Eucharist ; if the cup, when blessed, is the communion of our Redeemer's blood ; if the bread, when broken, is the communion of his body ; does it not follow, of necessity, that our Lord himself co-operates in this effect, and communicates these benefits ? Where influences are dispensed, to which no less name will fit than the body and blood of Christ, who but Christ himself could be the dispenser ? The communications thus denominated, must proceed from Christ himself. The body and blood of the once crucified, but now ever living Lord, are necessarily HIMSELF ; and, accordingly, in his own divine appointment of this mystery,—to eat his flesh, and drink his blood, is equivalent with eating himself. He says, “ He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him ; as the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.” Necessarily, then, is our Saviour himself there, where he himself is to be eaten. Himself, he has told us, is the bread of life ; and himself is the giver of this bread. “ The bread,” says he, “ is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” As the Divine gift, therefore, in the sacrament, is Christ himself ; so that which is divinely effected in this sacrament, is effected by Christ himself : his own words bring us to this conclusion. We must ascribe to those

words an adequate sense. They certainly admit of no gross or corporeal interpretation; for, as he himself has said, "they are spirit, and they are life." But, combining the words of our Lord with the significant expressions of St. Paul, can we understand less by their united import, than that the eucharistic institution is the pledge, the token, and the medium, of our Redeemer's peculiar presence and special operation; that the promises, "Lo, I am with you always," and "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of you," have, in this sacrament, by reason of its exalted purpose and vital effect, their noblest and most appropriate fulfilment; and that the symbols, by which our Lord has been pleased to notify his special presence, and through which to convey his saving influence, when, according to his command and example, consecrated to this use, are to Christians every thing that the pillar of the cloud and the mysterious ark were to the ancient Israelites; or rather are, in that same manner, what no semblance can adequately represent.

For, if we allow their reasonable force to the expressions which have been adduced, can we deem the bread, when broken, and the cup, when blessed, to be any thing less than the humble veil, behind which our Redeemer conceals that glory, whose open effulgence even the beloved disciple was unable to sustain? If we consider the use to which those symbols serve, must they not appear to us as much more than the hem of our Saviour's garment, which the diseased woman touched, and was healed; much more than instruments in his

hand ; as being, in the most exalted sense, conduits, not only from, but of, himself? And, as nothing could make such means serve such a purpose but Omnipotence, the awe, inseparable from this attribute, is, in due proportion, awakened. The Eucharist, in its gracious import far more exalted than Mount Zion, is guarded by terrors strictly akin to those of Mount Sinai: terrors, dreadful to the profane ; but evincing only more strongly to the devoted, the majesty of Him to whom they have access ; as the whirlwind, the earthquake, and the fire, prepared Elijah for listening with more entire confidence to the “ still small voice.”

The sacrament of the Eucharist, thus apprehended, would, of necessity, be valued, venerated, and loved ; it would be all but adored. The Jews, among all their deviations, never dreamed of adoring the mysterious ark : they worshipped toward it : but they never confounded homage to Him who rested upon it, with homage to itself ; nor, similarly, will any unprejudiced and enlightened Christian confound the visible symbols of the Eucharist with Him who makes them “ the hiding of his power.” It is to be lamented that such adoration should appear to be given, where, after all, on closer examination, it might be found to be in appearance, rather than in reality.

Yet, let no excess, or folly of others, deter us from receiving ideas, which the unerring Spirit of God presents to our minds ; or from yielding to the feelings, which, by the laws of our nature, those ideas are fitted to excite. In no brighter, or

lovelier light, could the eucharistic symbols have been placed before us, than as the communion of the Incarnate Messiah's body and blood: nor could that light have been accompanied by a deeper or more tremendous contrast, than in the doom pronounced against the undiscerning and the profane. Let us, then, regard holy things in the light which belongs to them, and as that light represents them, lest we lose the blessing, and hazard danger of the curse. Let us regard them in the light which belongs to them; that, so regarded, they may the more effectually draw our minds and hearts to that which they exhibit,—the person and character, the unspeakable mercy, and omnipotent grace, of our Lord and Saviour: that we may delight in the institution to which those impressive symbols give character and meaning; and love the society, and even the place, in which this mystery is transacted,—the mystery of Him, who liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore,—revisiting his people as effectually, though invisibly, as he came to his Apostles, when the doors were shut, for fear of the Jews; coming,—as it becomes Emmanuel, God with us, to come,—for a purpose, in which all his former acts are made effectual; and to accomplish it in a manner, which angels cannot but desire to look into; coming, therefore, with a glory, which, were it unveiled, would be insupportable by our feeble nature: in a word, so coming, as to make the transaction, in all its features and circumstances, a constant occasion of rational wonder, sober elevation, and undeclining joy; of exquisite and inexhaustible reflection, on

things that are past ; of heart-satisfying confidence, in things that are present ; of hope for the future, brighter than the sun, high as heaven, and boundless as eternity.

I have dwelt upon the subject of the Eucharist far beyond what I had intended ; but I am not aware, that in doing so, I have departed from my primary purpose. My object was, to explain the nature of our salvation through Christ ; and, following the guidance of Holy Scripture, as well as the concurrent sentiment of the Catholic Church, I have resolved that salvation, into the inward and spiritual grace, of which the outward and visible sign, in both sacraments, but most eminently and effectually in that of the Eucharist, is the peculiarly appointed medium. In enlarging, therefore, on the sacrament of the Eucharist, I seem to myself to have closely adhered to the course of instruction given by our Redeemer ; who, in the time, manner, and form, of that sacred institution, and, still more, in its declared purpose, has made it a compendium of the Gospel dispensation.

It could, in reality, be nothing less than this, by being the sacrament of Christ's body and blood ; for, if these are the spiritual aliments, which, according to our Redeemer, communicate inextinguishable life to the soul ; and to give this life, was, as he himself declares, the end of his coming,—the mysterious institution, in which this communication is made, must, of necessity, combine within it every essential principle of the evangelic scheme.

I conceive, therefore, that, in endeavouring to elucidate the doctrine of the Eucharist, I have

only given another view of the evangelical simplicity for which it was my leading purpose to contend. However greatly I have fallen short of doing justice to the subject, I have the comfort of thinking, that no doctrinal theory can ascribe greater moment, or efficacy, to the death of Christ, than that which has been pleaded for in the preceding paragraphs. It has not been questioned, that Christ redeemed mankind, once for all, by the meritorious efficacy of his incarnation, and obedience unto death; but it has been the great object of the preceding remarks, to point out another redemption, effected inwardly, and spiritually, in men's minds and hearts, by an influence, of which the Incarnate Messiah is the source; and to the strength and fitness of which, every act of his life, and every circumstance of his sufferings and death, contributes its proportion. It cannot, therefore, be objected, that the view of redemption which has been now given, overlooks our blessed Saviour, or despoils him of any part of his honour. It must be felt, on the contrary, that the notion of redemption, for which I have been pleading, places Incarnate Godhead, necessarily and unreservedly, on the throne of the heart; makes him in his life, his death, his resurrection, his glorified humanity, *that*, to man's moral nature, which the sun, in the firmament of heaven, is to material nature. Yea, infinitely more than any sensible similitude can represent: an object, to be kept in view every day and hour; a resource never to be departed from; a spring of blessing, of health, of strength, of purity, of peace, of joy, of all that prepares for, and all

that anticipates, the bliss of heaven, and the life of eternity. Can the Redeemer be more truly honoured, than by being thus represented ? or will the view, which makes redemption a mere satisfaction to offended justice, and the recovery of a forfeited inheritance, bear any comparison with the regarding of Christ himself, in all his characters, but especially in his dying on the cross, as the source of every feeling, which it is our happiness to cherish : the antidote of every tendency which threatens our safety, impedes our progress, or obscures our comfort : in a word, as the life of life, the spring of well-being, the refuge, resting-place, and treasure of the heart ?

APPENDIX.

THE Appendix to these volumes contains two tracts;—a reprint of “Mrs. Barbauld’s Essay on Devotional Taste,” and a supplementary treatise of Mr. Knox’s, “On the Doctrine of Baptism, as held by the Church of England.” No apology will be necessary for adding these treatises to the body of the work: the first presents, in this form, a convenient mode of reference to Mr. Knox’s “Thoughts on Mrs. Barbauld’s Essay,” &c.; and the second,—though, in part, a repetition of the “Essay on the Doctrine of Baptism,” &c.—contains much that is original and excellent. The new, might, indeed, have been separated from the old; but, on the principle of publishing exactly what Mr. Knox wrote, it has been thought better to give the treatise entire.

APPENDIX.

I.

THOUGHTS ON DEVOTIONAL TASTE; AND ON SECTS AND ESTABLISHMENTS.*

It is observed by a late most amiable and elegant writer, that religion may be considered in three different views. As a system of opinions, its sole object is truth; and the only faculty that has any thing to do with it, is reason, exerted in the freest and most dispassionate inquiry. As a principle regulating our conduct, religion is a habit; and, like all other habits, of slow growth, and gaining strength only by repeated exertions. But it may likewise be considered as a taste, an affair of sentiment and feeling; and in this sense, it is properly called devotion. Its seat is in the imagination and the passions; and it has its source in that relish for the sublime, the vast, and the beautiful, by which we taste the charms of poetry and other compositions that address our finer feelings; rendered more lively and interesting, by a sense of gratitude for personal benefits. It is in a great degree constitutional; and is by no means found in exact proportion to the virtue of a character.

It is with relation to this last view of the subject, that the observations in this essay are hazarded: for though, as a rule of life, the authority and salutary effects of religion are pretty universally acknowledged, and though its tenets have been defended with sufficient zèal, its affections languish, the spirit of devotion is certainly at a very low ebb amongst us; and what is surprising, it has

* This Essay was first printed in 1775, prefixed to a collection of Devotional Pieces, compiled from the Psalms of David.

fallen, I know not how, into a certain contempt, and is treated with great indifference, amongst many of those who value themselves on the purity of their faith, and who are distinguished by the sweetness of their morals. As the religious affections, in a great measure, rise and fall with the pulse, and are affected by every thing which acts upon the imagination, they are apt to run into strange excesses ; and, if directed by a melancholy or enthusiastic faith, their workings are often too strong for a weak head or a delicate frame ; and, for this reason, they have been almost excluded from religious worship by many persons of real piety. It is the character of the present age to allow little to sentiment ; and all the warm and generous emotions are treated as romantic, by the supercilious brow of a cold-hearted philosophy. The man of science, with an air of superiority, leaves them to some florid declaimer, who professes to work upon the passions of the lower class ; where they are so debased by noise and nonsense, that it is no wonder if they move disgust in those of elegant and better informed minds.

Yet there is a devotion, generous, liberal, and humane, the child of more exalted feelings than base minds can enter into, which assimilates man to higher natures, and lifts him “above this visible diurnal sphere.” Its pleasures are ultimate ; and, when early cultivated, continue vivid, even in that uncomfortable season of life when some of the passions are extinct ; when imagination is dead ; and the heart begins to contract within itself. Those who want this taste, want a sense, a part of their nature ; and should not presume to judge of feelings, to which they must ever be strangers. No one pretends to be a judge in poetry, or the fine arts, who has not both a natural and a cultivated relish for them : and shall the narrow-minded children of earth, absorbed in low pursuits, dare to treat as visionary, objects which they have never made themselves acquainted with ? Silence on such subjects will better become them. But to vindicate the pleasures of devotion, to those who have neither taste nor knowledge about them, is not the present object. It

rather deserves our inquiry, what causes have contributed to check the operation of religious impressions amongst those who have steady principles, and are well disposed to virtue.

And, in the first place, there is nothing more prejudicial to the feelings of a devout heart, than a habit of disputing on religious subjects. Free inquiry is, undoubtedly, necessary, to establish a rational belief; but a disputatious spirit, and fondness for controversy, give the mind a sceptical turn, with an aptness to call in question the most established truths. It is impossible to preserve that deep reverence for the Deity, with which we ought to regard him, when all his attributes, and even his very existence, become the subject of familiar debate. Candour demands that a man should allow his opponent an unlimited freedom of speech; and it is not easy, in the heat of discourse, to avoid falling into an indecent, or careless expression: hence, those who think seldomer of religious subjects, often treat them with more respect than those whose profession keeps them constantly in their view. A plain man of a serious turn, would probably be shocked to hear questions of this nature treated with that ease and negligence with which they are generally discussed by the practised theologian, or the young lively academic, ready primed from the schools of logic and metaphysics. As the ear loses its delicacy by being obliged only to hear coarse and vulgar language, so the veneration for religion wears off by hearing it treated with disregard, though we ourselves are employed in defending it; and to this it is owing, that many who have confirmed themselves in the belief of religion, have never been able to recover that strong and affectionate sense of it which they had before they began to inquire; and have wondered to find their devotion grown weaker, when their faith was better grounded. Indeed, strong reasoning powers and quick feelings, do not often unite in the same person. Men of a scientific turn seldom lay their hearts open to impression. Previously biassed by the love of system, they do indeed attend the offices of religion; but they dare not

trust themselves with the preacher; and are continually upon the watch to observe whether every sentiment agrees with their own particular tenets.

The spirit of inquiry is easily distinguished from the spirit of disputation. A state of doubt is not a pleasant state. It is painful, anxious, and distressing, beyond most others: it disposes the mind to dejection and modesty. Whoever, therefore, is so unfortunate, as not to have settled his opinions in important points, will proceed in the search of truth with deep humility, unaffected earnestness, and a serious attention to every argument that may be offered, which he will be much rather inclined to revolve in his own mind, than to use as materials for dispute. Even with these dispositions, it is happy for a man, when he does not find much to alter in the religious system he has embraced; for, if that undergoes a total revolution, his religious feelings are, too generally, so weakened by the shock, that they hardly recover again their original tone and vigour.

Shall we mention philosophy as an enemy to religion? God forbid! Philosophy,

Daughter of Heaven, that, slow ascending, still
Investigating sure the form of things,
With radiant finger points to Heaven again.

Yet there is a view in which she exerts an influence, perhaps rather unfavourable to the fervour of simple piety. Philosophy does indeed enlarge our conceptions of the Deity; and gives us the sublimest ideas of his power and extent of dominion; but it raises him too high for our imaginations to take hold of; and, in a great measure, destroys that affectionate regard which is felt by the common class of pious Christians. When, after contemplating the numerous productions of this earth, the various forms of being, the laws, the mode of their existence, we rise yet higher, and turn our eyes to that magnificent profusion of suns and systems, which astronomy pours upon the mind,—when we grow acquainted with the majestic order of nature, and those eternal laws,

which bind the material and intellectual worlds,—when we trace the footsteps of creative energy, through regions of unmeasured space, and still find new wonders disclosed, and pressing upon the view,—we grow giddy with the prospect; the mind is astonished, confounded at its own insignificance; we think it almost impiety for a worm to lift its head from the dust, and address the Lord of so stupendous a universe; the idea of communion with our Maker, shocks us as presumption; and the only feeling the soul is capable of, in such a moment, is a deep and painful sense of its own abasement. It is true, the same philosophy teaches that the Deity is intimately present, through every part of this complicated system, and neglects not any of his works: but this is a truth which is believed without being felt; our imagination cannot here keep pace with our reason, and the Sovereign of nature seems ever further removed from us, in proportion as we enlarge the bounds of his creation.

Philosophy represents the Deity in too abstracted a manner to engage our affections. A Being without hatred, and without fondness, going on in one steady course of even benevolence, neither delighted with praises, nor moved by importunity, does not interest us so much as a character open to the feelings of indignation, the soft relentings of mercy, and the partialities of particular affections. We require some common nature, or at least, the appearance of it, on which to build our intercourse. It is also a fault of which philosophers are often guilty, that they dwell too much in generals. Accustomed to reduce every thing to the operation of general laws, they turn our attention to larger views; attempt to grasp the whole order of the universe; and in the zeal of a systematic spirit, seldom leave room for those particular and personal mercies which are the food of gratitude. They trace the great outline of nature; but neglect the colouring, which gives warmth and beauty to the piece. As, in poetry, it is not vague and general description, but a few striking circumstances, clearly related, and strongly worked up,—as, in a landscape, it is not such a vast

extensive range of country, as pains the eye to stretch to its limits, but a beautiful, well-defined prospect,—which gives the most pleasure ; so neither are those unbounded views in which philosophy delights, so much calculated to touch the heart, as home views, and nearer objects. The philosopher offers up general praises on the altar of universal nature ; the devout man, on the altar of his heart, presents his own sighs, his own thanksgivings, his own earnest desires ; the former worship is more sublime, the latter more personal and affecting.

We are likewise too scrupulous in our public exercises, and too studious of accuracy. A prayer strictly philosophical must ever be a cold and dry composition. From an over-anxious fear of admitting any expression that is not strictly proper, we are apt to reject all warm and pathetic imagery, and, in short, every thing that strikes upon the heart and the senses. But it may be said, “ If the Deity be indeed so sublime a Being, and if his designs and manner are so infinitely beyond our comprehension, how can a thinking mind join in the addresses of the vulgar, or avoid being overwhelmed with the indistinct vastness of such an idea ? ” Far be it from me to deny, that awe and veneration must ever make a principal part of our regards to the Master of the universe ; or to defend that style of indecent familiarity, which is yet more shocking than indifference : but let it be considered that we cannot hope to avoid all improprieties, in speaking of such a Being ; that the most philosophical address we can frame is, probably, no more free from them, than the devotions of the vulgar ; that the Scripture set us an example of accommodating the language of prayer to common conceptions, and making use of figures, and modes of expression, far from being strictly defensible ; and that, upon the whole, it is safer to trust to our genuine feelings, feelings implanted in us by the God of nature, than to any metaphysical subtilties. He has impressed me with the idea of trust and confidence, and my heart flies to him in danger ; of mercy to forgive, and I melt before him in penitence ; of bounty to bestow, and I

ask of him all I want or wish for. I may make use of an inaccurate expression, I may paint him to my imagination too much in the fashion of humanity ; but while my heart is pure, while I depart not from the line of moral duty, the error is not dangerous. Too critical a spirit is the bane of every thing great or pathetic. In our creeds let us be guarded ; let us there weigh every syllable ; but, in compositions addressed to the heart, let us give freer scope to the language of the affections, and the overflowing of a warm and generous disposition.

Another cause, which most effectually operates to check devotion, is ridicule. I speak not, here, of open derision of things sacred ; but there is a certain ludicrous style in talking of such subjects, which, without any ill design, does much harm ; and, perhaps, those whose studies or profession lead them to be chiefly conversant with the offices of religion, are most apt to fall into this impropriety ; for, their ideas being chiefly taken from that source, their common conversation is apt to be tinged with fanciful allusions to scripture expressions, to prayers, &c. which have all the effect of a parody ; and, like parodies, destroy the force of the finest passage by associating it with something trivial and ridiculous. Of this nature is Swift's well-known jest of " Dearly beloved Roger ;" which, whoever has strong upon his memory, will find it impossible to attend, with proper seriousness, to that part of the service. We should take great care to keep clear from all these trivial associations, in whatever we wish to be regarded as venerable.

Another species of ridicule to be avoided, is that kind of sneer often thrown upon those whose hearts are giving way to honest emotion. There is an extreme delicacy in all the finer affections, which makes them shy of observation, and easily checked. Love, wonder, pity, the enthusiasm of poetry, shrink from the notice of even an indifferent eye ; and never indulge themselves freely but in solitude, or when heightened by the powerful force of sympathy. Observe an ingenuous youth at a well-wrought tragedy. If all around him are moved, he suffers his

tears to flow freely ; but if a single eye meets him with a glance of contemptuous indifference, he can no longer enjoy his sorrow ; he blushes at having wept ; and, in a moment, his heart is shut up to every impression of tenderness. It is sometimes mentioned as a reproach to Protestants, that they are susceptible of a false shame, when observed in the exercises of their religion, from which Papists are free. But I take this to proceed from the purer nature of our religion ; for the less it is made to consist in outward pomp and mechanical worship, and the more it has to do with the finer affections of the heart, the greater will be the reserve and delicacy which attend the expression of its sentiments. Indeed, ridicule ought to be very sparingly used ; for it is an enemy to every thing sublime or tender : the least degree of it, whether well or ill founded, suddenly and instantaneously stops the workings of passion ; and those who indulge a talent that way would do well to consider, that they are rendering themselves for ever incapable of all the higher pleasures, either of taste or morals. More especially do these cold pleasantries hurt the minds of youth, by checking that generous expansion of heart, to which their open tempers are naturally prone, and producing a vicious shame, through which they are deprived of the enjoyment of heroic sentiments, or generous action.

In the next place, let us not be superstitiously afraid of superstition. It shews great ignorance of the human heart, and the springs by which its passions are moved, to neglect taking advantage of the impression which particular circumstances, times, and seasons, naturally make upon the mind. The root of all superstition is the principle of the association of ideas ; by which objects, naturally indifferent, become dear and venerable through their connexion with interesting ones. It is true, this principle has been much abused ; it has given rise to pilgrimages innumerable, worship of relics, and priestly power. But let us not carry our ideas of purity and simplicity so far, as to neglect it entirely. Superior natures, it is possible, may be equally affected with the same truths,

at all times, and in all places; but we are not so made. Half the pleasures of elegant minds are derived from this source. Even the enjoyments of sense without it would lose much of their attraction. Who does not enter into the sentiment of the poet, in that passage so full of nature and truth—

He that outlives this hour, and comes safe home,
Shall stand on tiptoe when this day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian :
He that outlives this day, and sees old age,
Will yearly, on the vigil, feast his neighbours,
And say, To-morrow is St. Crispian ?

But were not the benefits of the victory equally apparent on any other day of the year? Why commemorate the anniversary with such distinguished regard? Those who can ask such a question, have never attended to some of the strongest instincts in our nature. Yet it has lately been the fashion, amongst those who call themselves rational Christians, to treat as puerile, all attentions of this nature, when relative to religion. They would

Kiss with pious lips the sacred earth
Which gave a Hampden or a Russell birth ;—

they will visit the banks of Avon with all the devotion of enthusiastic zeal; celebrate the birthday of the hero and the patriot; and yet pour contempt upon the Christian, who suffers himself to be warmed by similar circumstances, relating to his Master, or the connexion of sentiments of peculiar reverence, with times, places, and men, which have been appropriated to the service of religion. A wise preacher will not, from a fastidious refinement, disdain to affect his hearers, from the season of the year, the anniversary of a national blessing, a remarkable escape from danger, or, in short, any incident that is sufficiently guarded, and far enough removed from what is trivial, to be out of danger of becoming ludicrous.

It will not be amiss to mention here, a reproach which has been cast upon devotional writers,—that they are apt to run into the language of love. Perhaps the charge

would be full as just had they said, that Love borrows the language of Devotion; for the votaries of that passion are fond of using those exaggerated expressions which can suit nothing below Divinity; and you can hardly address the greatest of all beings in a strain of more profound adoration than the lover uses to the object of his attachment. But the truth is, devotion does, in no small degree, resemble that fanciful and elevated kind of love which depends not on the senses. Nor is the likeness to be wondered at, since both have their source in the love of beauty and excellence. Both are exceeding prone to superstition, and apt to run into romantic excesses. Both are nourished by poetry and music, and felt with the greatest fervour in the warmer climates. Both carry the mind out of itself, and powerfully refine the affections from every thing gross, low, and selfish.

But it is time to retire, we are treading upon enchanted ground, and shall be suspected by many of travelling towards the regions of chivalry and old romance. And were it so, many a fair majestic idea might be gathered from those forgotten walks, which would well answer the trouble of transplanting. It must, however, be owned, that very improper language has formerly been used on these subjects; but there cannot be any great danger of such excesses where the mind is guarded by a rational faith, and the social affections have full scope in the free commerce and legitimate connexions of society.

Having thus considered the various causes which contribute to deaden the feelings of devotion, it may not be foreign to the subject to inquire in what manner they are affected by the different modes of religion. I speak not of opinions, for these have much less influence upon the heart than the circumstances which attend particular persuasions. A sect may only differ from an establishment as one absurd opinion differs from another; but there is a character and cast of manners belonging to each which will be perfectly distinct; and of a sect the character will vary, as it is a rising, or a declining sect,—persecuted, or at ease. Yet, while divines have wearied

the world with canvassing contrary doctrines and jarring articles of faith, the philosopher has not considered, as the subject deserved, what situation was most favourable to virtue, sentiment, and pure manners. To a philosophic eye, free from prejudice, and accustomed to large views of the great polity carried on in the moral world, perhaps varying and opposite forms may appear proper, and well calculated for their respective ends; and he will neither wish entirely to destroy the old, nor wholly to crush the new.

The great line of division between different modes of religion, is formed by establishments and sects. In an infant sect, which is always in some degree a persecuted one, the strong union and entire affection of its followers, the sacrifices they make to principle, the force of novelty, and the amazing power of sympathy, all contribute to cherish devotion. It rises even to passion, and absorbs every other sentiment. Severity of manners imposes respect; and the earnestness of the new proselytes renders them insensible to injury, or even to ridicule. A strain of eloquence, often coarse, indeed, but strong and persuasive, works like leaven in the heart of the people. In this state all outward helps are superfluous, the living spirit of devotion is amongst them, the world sinks away to nothing before it, and every object but one is annihilated. The social principle mixes with the flame, and renders it more intense; strong parties are formed, and friends or lovers are not more closely connected than the members of these little communities.

It is this kind of devotion, a devotion which those of more settled and peaceable times can only guess at, which made amends to the first Christians for all they resigned, and all they suffered: this draws the martyr to a willing death, and enables the confessor to endure a voluntary poverty. But this stage cannot last long; the heat of persecution abates, and the fervour of zeal feels a proportional decay. Now comes on the period of reasoning and examination. The principles which have produced such mighty effects on the minds of men acquire an

importance, and become objects of the public attention. Opinions are canvassed. Those who before bore testimony to their religion only by patient suffering, now defend it with argument, and all the keenness of polemical disquisition is awakened on either side. The fair and generous idea of religious liberty, which never originates in the breast of a triumphant party, now begins to unfold itself. To vindicate these rights, and explain these principles, learning, which in the former state was despised, is assiduously cultivated by the sectaries; their minds become enlightened, and a large portion of knowledge, especially religious knowledge, is diffused through their whole body. Their manners are less austere, without having as yet lost any thing of their original purity. Their ministers gain respect as writers, and their pulpit discourses are studied and judicious. The most unfavourable circumstance of this era is, that those who dissent are very apt to acquire a critical and disputatious spirit; for, being continually called upon to defend doctrines in which they differ from the generality, their attention is early turned to the argumentative part of religion; and hence we see that sermons, which afford food for this taste, are with them thought of more importance than prayer and praise; though these latter are undoubtedly the more genuine and indispensable parts of public worship.

This, then, is the second period; the third approaches fast: men grow tired of a controversy which becomes insipid from being exhausted; persecution has not only ceased, it begins to be forgotten; and from the absence of opposition in either kind, springs a fatal and spiritless indifference. The sobriety, industry, and abstinence from fashionable pleasures, which distinguished the fathers, have made the sons wealthy; and, eager to enjoy their riches, they long to mix with that world, a separation from which was the best guard to their virtues. A secret shame creeps in upon them when they acknowledge their relation to a disesteemed sect; they, therefore, endeavour to file off its peculiarities; but, in so doing, they destroy its very being. Connexions with the establishment,

whether of intimacy, business, or relationship, which formerly, from their superior zeal, turned to the advantage of the sect, now operate against it. Yet these connexions are formed more frequently than ever; and those who, a little before, soured by the memory of recent suffering, betrayed, perhaps, an aversion from having any thing in common with the church, now affect to come as near it as possible; and, like a little boat that takes a large vessel in tow, the sure consequence is, the being drawn into its vortex. They aim at elegance and show in their places of worship, the appearance of their preachers, &c.; and thus impolitically awaken a taste it is impossible they should ever gratify. They have worn off many forbidding singularities, and are grown more amiable and pleasing. But those singularities were of use: they set a mark upon them; they pointed them out to the world, and thus obliged persons, so distinguished, to exemplary strictness. No longer obnoxious to the world, they are open to all the seductions of it. Their minister, that respectable character, which once inspired reverence and affectionate esteem, their teacher and their guide, is now dwindled into the mere leader of the public devotions; or, lower yet, a person hired to entertain them every week with an elegant discourse. In proportion as his importance decreases, his salary sits heavy on the people; and he feels himself depressed by that most cruel of all mortifications to a generous mind, the consciousness of being a burden upon those from whom he derives his scanty support. Unhappily, amidst this change of manners, there are forms of strictness, and a set of phrases, introduced in their first enthusiasm, which still subsist: these they are ashamed to use, and know not how to decline; and their behaviour, in consequence of them, is awkward and irresolute. Those who have set out with the largest share of mysticism and flighty zeal, find themselves particularly embarrassed by this circumstance.

When things are come to this crisis, their tendency is evident: and though the interest and name of a sect may be kept up for a time by the generosity of former

ages, the abilities of particular men, or that reluctance which keeps a generous mind from breaking old connexions; it must, in a short course of years, melt away into the establishment, the womb and the grave of all other modes of religion.

An establishment affects the mind by splendid buildings, music, the mysterious pomp of ancient ceremonies; by the sacredness of peculiar orders, habits, and titles; by its secular importance; and by connecting with religion ideas of order, dignity, and antiquity. It speaks to the heart through the imagination and the senses; and though it never can raise devotion so high as we have described it in a beginning sect, it will preserve it from ever sinking into contempt. As to a woman in the glow of health and beauty, the most careless dress is the most becoming; but, when the freshness of youth is worn off, greater attention is necessary, and rich ornaments are required to throw an air of dignity round her person; so while a sect retains its first plainness, simplicity, and affectionate zeal, it wants nothing an establishment could give; but that once declined, the latter becomes far more respectable. The faults of an establishment grow venerable from length of time; the improvements of a sect appear whimsical from their novelty. Ancient families fond of rank, and of that order which secures it to them, are on the side of the former. Traders incline to the latter; and so do generally men of genius, as it favours their originality of thinking. An establishment leans to superstition, a sect to enthusiasm; the one is a more dangerous and violent excess, the other more fatally debilitates the powers of the mind; the one is a deeper colouring, the other a more lasting dye; but the coldness and languor of a declining sect produces scepticism. Indeed, a sect is never stationary, as it depends entirely on passions and opinions; though it often attains excellence, it never rests in it, but is always in danger of one extreme or the other; whereas an old establishment, whatever else it may want, possesses the grandeur arising from stability.

We learn to respect whatever respects itself; and are

easily led to think that system requires no alteration which never admits of any. It is this circumstance more than any other which gives a dignity to that accumulated mass of error, the Church of Rome. A fabric which has weathered many successive ages, though the architecture be rude, the parts disproportionate and overloaded with ornament, strikes us with a sort of admiration merely from its having held so long together.

The minister of a sect, and of an establishment, is upon a very different footing. The former is like the popular leader of an army; he is obeyed with enthusiasm, while he is obeyed at all; but his influence depends on opinion, and is entirely personal: the latter resembles a general appointed by the monarch; he has soldiers less warmly devoted to him, but more steady and better disciplined. The dissenting teacher is nothing if he have not the spirit of a martyr, and is the scorn of the world if he be not above the world. The clergyman possessed of power and affluence, and for that reason chosen from among the better ranks of people, is respected as a gentleman, though not venerated as an apostle; and, as his profession generally obliges him to decent manners, his order is considered as a more regular and civilised class of men than their fellow-subjects of the same rank. The dissenting teacher separated from the people, but not raised above them, invested with no power, entitled to no emoluments, if he cannot acquire for himself authority, must feel the bitterness of dependence. The ministers of the former denomination cannot fall, but in some violent convulsion of the state: those of the latter, when indifference and mutual neglect begin to succeed to that close union which once subsisted between them and their followers, lose their former influence without resource; the dignity and weight of their office is gone for ever; they feel the insignificancy of their pretensions; their spirits sink; and, except they take refuge in some collateral pursuit, and stand candidates for literary fame, they slide into an ambiguous and undecided character; their time is too often sacrificed to frivolous compliances; their man-

ners lose their austerity, without having proportionally gained in elegance; the world does not acknowledge them, for they are not of the world; it cannot esteem them, for they are not superior to the world.

Upon the whole, then, it should seem that the strictness of a sect (and it can only be respectable by being strict) is calculated for a few finer spirits, who make religion their chief object. As to the much larger number, on whom she has only an imperfect influence, making them decent, if not virtuous, and meliorating the heart, without greatly changing it; for all these, the genius of an establishment is more eligible, and better fitted to cherish that moderate devotion, of which alone they are capable. All those who have not strength of mind to think for themselves, who would live to virtue without denying the world, who wish much to be religious, but more to be genteel, naturally flow into the establishment. If it offered no motives to their minds but such as are perfectly pure and spiritual, their devotion would not for that be more exalted, it would die away to nothing; and it is better their minds should receive only a tincture of religion, than be wholly without it. Those too, whose passions are regular and equable, and who do not aim at abstracted virtues, are commonly placed to most advantage within the pale of the national faith.

All the greater exertions of the mind,—spirit to reform, fortitude and constancy to suffer,—can be expected only from those who, forsaking the common road, are exercised in a peculiar course of moral discipline; but it should be remembered, that these exertions cannot be expected from every character, nor on every occasion. Indeed, religion is a sentiment which takes such strong hold on all the most powerful principles of our nature, that it may easily be carried to excess. The Deity never meant our regards to him should engross the mind: that indifference to sensible objects which many moralists preach, is not perhaps desirable, except where the mind is raised above its natural tone, and extraordinary situations call forth extraordinary virtues. If the peculiar advantages of a

sect were well understood, its followers would not be impatient of those moderate restraints which do not rise to persecution, nor affect any of their more material interests; for, do they not bind them closer to each other, cherish zeal, and keep up the love of liberty? What is the language of such restraints? Do they not say, with a prevailing voice, Let the timorous and the worldly depart; no one shall be of this persuasion who is not sincere, disinterested, conscientious? It is, notwithstanding, proper, that men should be sensible of all their rights, assert them boldly, and protest against every infringement; for it may be of advantage to bear, what yet it is unjustifiable in others to inflict.

Neither would dissenters, if they attended to their real interests, be so ambitious as they generally are, of rich converts. Such converts only accelerate their decline: they relax their discipline, and they acquire an influence very pernicious in societies, which ought to breathe nothing but the spirit of equality.

Sects are always strict in proportion to the corruption of establishments, and the licentiousness of the times; and they are useful in the same proportion. Thus the austere lives of the primitive Christians counterbalanced the vices of that abandoned period; and thus the puritans, in the reign of Charles the Second, seasoned with a wholesome severity the profligacy of public manners. They were less amiable than their descendants of the present day; but to be amiable was not the object: they were of public utility; and their scrupulous sanctity (carried to excess, themselves only considered), like a powerful antiseptic opposed the contagion breathed from a most dissolute court. In like manner, that sect, one of whose most striking characteristics is a beautiful simplicity of dialect, served to check that strain of servile flattery and Gothic compliment so prevalent in the same period; and to keep up some idea of that manly plainness with which one human being ought to address another.

Thus have we seen that different modes of religion, though they bear little good-will to each other, are never-

theless mutually useful. Perhaps there is not an establishment so corrupt as not to make the gross of mankind better than they would be without it. Perhaps there is not a sect so eccentric but that it has set some one truth in the strongest light, or carried some one virtue, before neglected, to its utmost height, or loosened some obstinate and long-rooted prejudice. They answer their end, they die away; others spring up, and take their place. So the purer part of the element, continually drawn off from the mighty mass of waters, forms rivers which, running in various directions, fertilise large countries; yet, always tending towards the ocean, every accession to their bulk or grandeur but precipitates their course, and hastens their re-union with the common reservoir from which they were separated.

In the mean time, the devout heart always finds associates suitable to its disposition and the particular cast of its virtues; while the continual flux and reflux of opinions prevents the active principles from stagnating. There is an analogy between things material and immaterial. As, from some late experiments in philosophy, it has been found that the process of vegetation restores and purifies vitiated air, so does that moral and political ferment, which accompanies the growth of new sects, communicate a kind of spirit and elasticity necessary to the vigour and health of the soul, but soon lost amidst the corrupted breath of an indiscriminate multitude.

There remains only to add, lest the preceding view of sects and establishments should in any degree be misapprehended, that it has nothing to do with the *truth* of opinions; and relates only to the influence which the adventitious circumstances attending them, may have upon the manners and morals of their followers. It is therefore calculated to teach us candour, but not indifference. Large views of the moral polity of the world, may serve to illustrate the providence of God, in his different dispensations; but are not made to regulate our individual conduct, which must conscientiously follow our own opinions and belief. We may see much good in an establish-

ment, the doctrines of which we cannot give our assent to, without violating our integrity; we may respect the tendencies of a sect, the tenets of which we utterly disapprove. We may think practices useful which we cannot adopt without hypocrisy. We may think all religions beneficial, and believe of one alone that it is true.

II.

THE DOCTRINE RESPECTING BAPTISM HELD BY THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THE sacrament of Baptism, through the appointment of our blessed Saviour, and by the operation of the Holy Spirit, conveys, to all susceptible receivers, not only the outward privileges of Christian communion, but the internal blessing of regenerating grace. This grace brings with it remission of sins; it implies a radical commencement of spiritual life, and gives a title to the everlasting inheritance.

An adult receiver of baptism can be susceptible of the internal blessing, only by possessing congenial predispositions; namely, repentance, whereby he forsakes sin, and faith, whereby he steadfastly believes (that is, unfeignedly embraces, and cordially aspires to) the promises of God made to him in that sacrament. The necessity of being thus qualified is obvious; because, in adults, with such predispositions, there is a positive indisposedness for the reception of any inward and spiritual blessing.

But, as an infant is as incapable of repelling divine grace, as of positively concurring in its reception, it is deducible from our blessed Saviour's language and actions respecting little children, from his receiving and blessing them expressly as little children, and declaring them, as such, to be fit subjects of his spiritual kingdom,—that all infants, regularly receiving the outward sign of baptism, partake infallibly of the inward and spiritual grace.

It is, accordingly, not to be doubted, that every infant, baptised as our Redeemer hath appointed, is, at the same time, regenerated by the Holy Spirit; and received, by

adoption, into the number of God's children, as well as incorporated into the visible Church. It is, consequently, to be believed, that in every such child, as far as in the nature of things is possible, there is an initial death of sin, and a seminal life of righteousness; and that, as this commencing grace, if retained and exercised, will lead to the crucifying of the old man, and the abolition of the whole body of sin; so, in case of death before commission of actual sin, it ensures an entrance into our Redeemer's everlasting kingdom.

The state, therefore, into which baptism brings the infant receiver, is not merely an external aptitude, or a prospective capability. It is, on the contrary, to be concluded, that the child is now, in a strict and spiritual sense of the terms, "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;" and, accordingly, every catechumen, on the charitable supposition that baptismal grace has not yet been forfeited, is taught, not only to thank God for the state of salvation into which he has been brought, but to pray for grace, that he may continue therein unto the end; a petition which would be absurd, as well as presumptuous, if it were not strictly, and infallibly, a state of present and everlasting safety.

But in this deeply significant passage of the Catechism, we have the clearest intimation of a still farther truth, which demands the most serious consideration; namely, that if wilful and gross sin has been committed, this state of salvation has been lost. What is retained solely through divine grace, must, consequently, be lost by yielding to sin: for grace and sin are opposite in the nature of things; and the dominion of the one, is the subjugation of the other. To pray, therefore, to God for his grace, in order to continuance in a state of salvation, is, at once, to imply that this state may be forfeited, and to shew the manner of its forfeiture. So long as we possess and exercise divine grace, we escape the corruption which is in this world through lust; but when lust hath conceived, (that is, when it is no longer effectually repressed by the

ruling influence of grace), it bringeth forth sin ; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

And, doubtless, it was from a view of this scriptural truth, that in the Litany as well as in the 16th Article, we meet the significant term, “deadly sin.” From the place this expression holds in the Litany, we perceive that it designates such a transgression of the divine law, as is, in its nature, gross and presumptuous ; and by its use in the Article, we are taught the ground of its specific denomination ; namely, because it destroys the life of grace which was given in baptism ; and, without effectual repentance, leads to death eternal.

The passage in the Article now referred to, is, indeed, altogether, singularly pertinent to our present subject ; because, perhaps, in no other instance is the doctrine of the Church of England, on this important point, either more fully or more compendiously conveyed. The error of the Novatians, who denied room for repentance to those who forfeited baptismal grace, is the object of censure ; but the terms made use of, are such as to place the judgment of our Church, respecting the doctrine of baptism, beyond the possibility of question.

“Not every deadly sin,” says the Article, “willingly committed after baptism, is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore, the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after baptism. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin ; and by the grace of God, we may rise again, and amend our lives.”

In the first place, then, it is remarkable, that the very mode of intimating the error to be rejected, assumes the fact of baptism being ordinarily accompanied by the gift of the Holy Spirit. For it could be only on the supposition of the Holy Ghost being given in baptism, that sin after baptism, could be so much as pretended to be sin against the Holy Ghost.

Had, therefore, the Church of England meant to differ

from the ancient Church, respecting the doctrine of baptismal grace, something would have been said against the premises of the Novatians, as well as against their conclusion: whereas, on the contrary, the Article expressly takes their premises for granted; speaking throughout, on the supposition, that to be baptised, was ordinarily equivalent, in point of fact, with receiving the Holy Ghost; and that to fall into sin after baptism, was, in effect, to depart from the grace which had been communicated in that sacrament.

The only limitation, therefore, which this general admission of baptismal regeneration will consistently bear, is that which is intimated in the 27th Article, where this blessing is confined to them that receive baptism *rightly*: a truth, it will be observed, applicable to adults only, and insisted on respecting them, in every age of the Christian Church.*

But besides what the reason of the case teaches,—that, where there can be no *wrong* reception, if there be any reception at all, it must be *right* reception—all application to infants of what had been said in the body of the Article, is precluded by the words with which it ends:—"The baptism of young children is in anywise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ." From which it follows, either that children, as such, were regarded infallibly right receivers, or were not meant to be included in the observation on right reception.

The doctrinal conclusiveness of the 16th Article, then, remaining unshaken, let us more closely examine the practical truth which it contains. The expression, "deadly sin committed after baptism," is itself, alone, replete with important meaning. "Deadly sin" could be committed only where, until then, there had been spiritual life. What had never been alive, could not suffer death. The term, therefore, necessarily supposes an antecedent posses-

* Simon Magus, it has ever been said, ascended from the baptismal font as he entered.

sion of the saving grace of God, which, through want of faithfulness, had, like “the shield of Saul, been vilely cast away.” Whence, then, came that life of grace which deadly sin extinguishes? Clearly from the instrumental efficacy of the laver of regeneration; otherwise, what would be the sense of “deadly sin committed after baptism?” These words necessarily imply, that baptism, through divine appointment and co-operation, confers the grace from which deadly sin departs, and the life which it destroys. The import of the expression is, if possible, still more indubitable, from the striking simplicity with which it is uttered. The belief of the Catholic Church respecting baptismal grace, is not argued, nor even explained, but obviously taken for granted, as what no one could dream of disputing.

There is, however, a wise concern for practical clearness; and therefore, in the next two sentences, the calamity is described not only as a departure from grace given, but as a fall into sin. This expression is doubtless used to distinguish *the yielding to evil by which baptismal grace is lost*, from those daily faults which the most unfeigned sincerity cannot prevent; and to describe *that great offence* as an actual apostasy, whether temporary or final, from the way of God’s commandments. That the word *fall*, is to be thus understood, appears from what immediately follows:—“And by the grace of God, we may rise again and amend our lives.” For this implies, that he who has fallen in the sense here intended, has lost, through his fall, the power of rising again by any mere exertions of his own; and that, therefore, without a renewed communication of the grace from which he has departed, he must remain an impotent victim of moral thralldom and essential wretchedness.

Having thus simply followed the guidance of this comprehensive document, are we not led to exactly the same view with that placed before us by the already quoted words in the third answer of the Catechism? Here, as there, we have the effect of baptism (when indisposedness in the receiver has not made it fruitless) in conferring on

the baptised, a state of grace and salvation ; and, further, we have that expanded in the Article which was only intimated in the Catechism,—*the discontinuance of the state of salvation*, if divine grace be not effectually implored and faithfully exercised.

On these authorities, the subject might be allowed to rest. But it will not be uninteresting, and it cannot be un instructive, to trace the same sentiments in other parts of our established formulary.

The baptismal service, from its nature, must be expected to assume doctrines, rather than to explain them. But, on examination, it will be found to contain very much which can be understood only in accordance with the passages adduced from the Catechism and the Articles.

For instance, in one of the introductory prayers there is a petition, that the child coming to God's holy baptism may receive remission of sins, by spiritual regeneration. Hence, then, it follows, that the regeneration which baptism is expected to confer, is not merely a change of circumstances, by which the baptised child stands in a new relation to God and to his Church ; but that it also implies an inward blessing, which, so long as it is possessed, constitutes a state of grace and salvation. Less cannot be comprehended in a regeneration which is spiritual, and which brings with it remission of sins. These terms describe what is strictly compatible with infant innocence ; and what Holy Scripture authorises us to conclude, may be retained, through God's blessing on parental care. But it needs no reasoning to shew, that he who departs from grace given, no longer retains spiritual regeneration ; and that a fall into sin must be a forfeiture of remission.

It is, in fact, impossible to make any intelligible distinction between the spiritual regeneration which is prayed for in the baptismal office, and that grace of the communicated Spirit, from which, according to the 16th Article, deadly sin implies departure. Nor, again, can we conceive sin to continue remitted one moment longer than

it is successfully escaped, or victoriously resisted. It would, perhaps, be found, that in the strictly evangelical notion of the term, remission of sin includes deliverance from the dominion of sin, no less than from its guilt; and that any other supposition would be absurd, and almost blasphemous. But that the Church of England judges thus, is unquestionable. In *her* devotions, to be forgiven, is to be loosed from the chain of sin; pardon of sin is united with deliverance from its yoke, and identified with being cleansed from its pollution. Remission of sins, therefore, in the language of the Church of England, describes a blessing which they who have departed from grace and fallen into sin cannot possibly enjoy. And, therefore, though it be neither necessary, nor, perhaps, strictly correct, to say that, in those who repent of deadly sin and are restored to a state of grace, regeneration is repeated; yet, in consistency, it must be held that, until they are so restored, their spiritual regeneration is radically interrupted; and the state of grace and remission which baptism had conferred, supplanted by a state of moral thralldom and guilt, from which there is no escape but through recommunicated grace, and an effectual conversion.

That such are, deliberately and digestedly, the principles of the Church of England, might be shewn from the entire sequel of the baptismal office. The state of grace into which baptism introduces, is regarded throughout as the first stage of a vital progress in all the Christian virtues. The child being considered as put into possession, seminally, of their essence, is expected, under the continued influence of Heaven, to grow up into their maturity; and, at length, to become "steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity." He is expressly declared to be so regenerated with the Holy Spirit, as to be dead to sin, alive unto righteousness, and buried with Christ in his death; and it is concluded that, if he lead the rest of his life according to this beginning, he will "crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin." In a word, he is already held to be made

partaker of the death of Christ; and is consequently assured, if he persevere, of participating in his resurrection.

From these, therefore, as well as all the other expressions in this solemn service, it is most evident that the spiritual regeneration on which the Church of England confides, comprehends all the vital elements of a new and heavenly nature; that, so far as in the nature of things is possible in an infant mind, it implies a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; that consequently it involves, in embryo, all the principles of Christian virtue, ready to shew themselves, if aided only by culture, and sheltered from the blight of evil example.

Shall we, then, ask whether, in the view of the Church of England, the inward and spiritual grace of baptism, which she herself has thus explained, still remains with each individual, whatever may be his subsequent moral conduct? Might we not as reasonably ask whether piety, righteousness, and sobriety, once possessed, remain with the possessor, whatever may be his subsequent moral conduct? For, according to the Church of England, the grace of baptism is the living germ of all pious affections and virtuous dispositions. During infancy and childish weakness, we can conceive such a principle to remain uninjured. But, when reason and conscience begin to act, this germ must either advance or decay; and its total suppression, is its virtual extinction. It can exist in an adult only in the sentiments and habits which it produces. Where, therefore, spiritual sentiments and habits have wholly ceased, it is not possible to suppose a continuance of spiritual life. That such, then, on the whole, is the settled doctrine of the Church of England, follows from her own deepest and most solemn references to the subject; to all which, the single use of the term deadly sin, gives decisive confirmation; as, in truth, it might of itself be deemed sufficient to set the question at rest.

It is, however, the practical import of the point, about which our Church is evidently most solicitous; and, therefore, while she wishes, as far as possible, to consider her children in the state of grace, she never ceases to remind

them that they may, too probably, have departed from grace given, and consequently be in a state of deadly sin. She particularly impresses this awful warning, in every repetition of the Litany, by distinctly interceding with God for those who are in the state of grace; for those who are in a state of deadly sin; and, also, for persons of an intermediate class, who have either not entirely lapsed, or, if lapsed and in part recovered, are not yet completely and consciously reinstated. The words of the petition are in every Churchman's memory; the comprehensive and weighty meaning may not have been as generally adverted to.

“That it may please thee to strengthen such as do stand, to comfort and help the weak-hearted, and to raise up them that fall.”

The least attention will shew, that there could not have been in words a clearer or more practical classification. Those who stand, are obviously the settled subjects of the state of grace: that is, they live habitually in the fear and love of God; in the spirit of true devotion; and in constant watchfulness against the world, the flesh, and the devil: they, therefore, through divine grace, rise superior to every gross temptation; and, from day to day, enjoy, in the secret of their heart, that “peace of God which passeth all understanding.” It is impossible to attach any lower sense to so significant a term. A thousand words could not describe more forcibly the state in which the Church wishes her faithful children to be kept; and to which she is anxious that both penitents and wanderers should be restored. The vague and frigid theory which contents itself with a regeneration implying not salvation, but mere salvability, imperceptible while possessed, and too unsubstantial to be forfeited, has evidently no place here. They who stand, in contradistinction to the weak-hearted, and in opposition to them that fall, cannot be confounded with such as fluctuate between sin and repentance, and derive all their comfort, not from consciousness of our Redeemer's effectual grace *within them*, but from abstract reliance on what he has done *for them*.

Doubtless the Church of England never loses sight of the merits of our blessed Saviour; but she confides in them, not as a substitute for internal grace, but as an infallible security that this grace will be freely communicated to all who cordially ask it; that it will be more amply given in proportion to faithful improvement and greater exigence; and that to those who substantially retain it, those unhallowed offences which arise from the original frailty that remains, says the 9th Article, “even in them that are regenerated;” but which, implying weakness rather than wickedness, do not violate our allegiance to God, will not be imputed to our condemnation.

The Church of England, therefore, does the truest honour both to the mercy of God, and to the merits of our Redeemer, by specifying a sure evidence in the heart and conduct that we are actual objects of mercy, and that Christ’s merits have availed in our behalf; namely, our standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made us free. By this characteristic, whether retained from baptism, or recovered through repentance and conversion, our Church recognises living members of Christ’s mystical body; and deeming all such to possess the reality of spiritual life, and to be in the path which, if not deserted, leads infallibly to life eternal, she prays merely for their advancement and confirmation: “That it may please thee to strengthen such as do stand.”

The import of this brief but significant supplication, will be best learned from a former part of the same comprehensive formula. They who stand, are obviously those who possess the blessing implored in that preceding petition:—“That it may please thee to give us an heart to love and dread thee, and diligently to live after thy commandments.” To pray, therefore, that such may be strengthened, is to express, in one word, the matter of the next following petition:—“That it may please thee to give unto all thy people increase of grace, to hear meekly thy word, to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.” To increase, and to be strengthened in grace, are evidently the same thing; and,

in proportion to this blessing, God's word will be heard with meekness; that is, will be submitted to without reserve: it will be received with pure affection; the mixture of love and dread, which was indispensable in a lower state, will give place to that perfect love which casteth out fear; and the exertions which were then necessary to preserve a good conscience, will be at once rewarded and superseded by a spontaneous harvest of spiritual virtues; duty having become delight, and goodness a second nature.

But the Church, in attending to those who are her glory, forgets not the feeble portion of the flock, nor even the wanderers from the fold. For the first, she implores "comfort and help,"—as if their hope needed to be brightened, as well as their resolution to be established. The terms are evidently chosen with deliberate appropriation. They shew, that those religious solitudes which are too often resolved into fanaticism or morbid melancholy, were, to the pious compilers of our Litany, an object of wise provision, as well as charitable commiseration.

For the unhappy persons, who are last mentioned, there could be but one appropriate petition,—that God would be pleased to raise up them that fall. The significance of these expressions cannot be questioned: their contrast with the first clause, of itself, ascertains their meaning. If to stand, is to be in a state of grace; to fall, is to forfeit it: or, in other words, if to stand, is to enjoy freedom from deadly sin; to fall, is to come under its dominion. The blessing, and the calamity, are, in this twofold sense, contrary to each other. To stand, is to be supported by divine grace, and, by that means, habitually to conquer deadly sin; to "fall," is to depart from divine grace, and to incur the guilt and bondage of deadly sin. The strict agreement of this language with that of the Article need not be pointed out. In the mercy implored, there is a slight, and, indeed, but verbal difference. The Litany prays to God, "to raise up them that fall:" the Article says, that they "who fall into sin, may, by the grace of God, rise again, and amend their lives." The truth is, that, *to rise* by divine grace, is *to be raised* by

divine grace ; for a fall into deadly sin, supposes spiritual death ; and the dead cannot rise, except they are raised by Omnipotence. The variety of expression is, however, substantially instructive ; for, while the term in the Litany, teaches us, that, in repentance and conversion, we owe all efficacy to God ; so, in the Article, we are instructed, that, in our reinstatement, we must be workers together with Him. On the whole, the Church, in beseeching God to raise them up that fall, expresses her deep sense of the calamity ; but still, a confidence, that He, who is no respecter of persons, doth yet “devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.” And the Article, by describing the penitent as rising, conveys an admonition, that, when those, who are dead in trespasses and sins, feel any animating touch from above, they should instantly embrace the opportunity, and cherish the gracious influence ; lest, if they despise the goodness which would lead them to repentance, they should be given over to a reprobate mind, and become, as it were, “twice dead, plucked up by the roots.”

Before this petition of the Litany be parted with, it must be stated, that what was remarked respecting the language of the 16th Article, holds, if possible, still more strictly true in the instance before us ; namely, that, though the terms employed are of the most general kind, not a word is said to explain this special application of them ; but, on the contrary, their obvious significance simply taken for granted.

We can account for this in one way only ; that the theological use of these two common verbs, to stand, and to fall, as descriptive of the two opposite states, of grace, and of deadly sin, was so universally known, as to require no explanatory observation. It simply follows, that the well-known ancient scheme of doctrine, which was solicitous to distinguish between these states, and dwelt upon this distinction, as of the deepest practical importance, was unreservedly and cordially held by our reformers ; and that, in all the leading ideas which this view necessarily involves, they thought it their wisest course to follow

the guidance afforded them by the united luminaries of the ancient Catholic Church.

It will be unnecessary to refer, particularly, to more than one other of our stated forms; and it is as much for the sake of elucidating some important expressions which are in daily use, as in order to throw additional light on the subject under consideration.

That the General Confession, in our daily service, awakes sentiments of sincere humiliation in many an individual, is not to be doubted; but it may be questioned, whether it is possible to join in it with the understanding as well as with the spirit; whether, in truth, the most intelligent mind can conceive the exact ideas which the words are meant to convey,—except, the doctrine of the Church, respecting the two states, of grace, and deadly sin, be known, and kept in remembrance?

The acknowledgments of aggravated deviation, with which the confession commences, may, probably, have been thought, by many, to refer to the early lapse of our nature, and the degeneracy which ensued. But a single expression in the sequel requires a different interpretation of the whole. It is remarkable, that, after all have owned and lamented those infidelities, from which, in some degree or kind, even the most upright would scarcely presume to say they had been always exempt, there is a change from the first to the third person; and two classes of characters are prayed for, as if they stood in special need of intercession. “Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults; restore thou them that are penitent.” It is the import of this latter petition, which clearly fixes the sense of what had preceded, and of what follows. A prayer for restoration implies, of necessity, a former possession of the state which it is the object to regain. This state, in the present instance, cannot be that from which our first parents fell; because restoration of penitents to paradisiacal innocence and happiness forms no part of the promises which are here relied upon. To what state, then, do we pray that penitents may be restored? Can it be any other, than the state of grace which, in consequence of

their early baptism, they had once infallibly possessed, but which they have forfeited by yielding to deadly sin? If the words in question stood alone, they might be almost unintelligible. But, when compared with the other forms which have been adduced, the meaning of this particular petition, of that also which immediately precedes it, and, indeed, of the entire Confession, becomes unquestionable. The scholastic distinction between attrition and contrition seems, even, to have been in view. They who confess their faults are considered as in the imperfect stage of *repentance*; and, therefore, God is entreated not to cut them off until their penitence has become cordial; when, for those who are thoroughly penitent, the congregation asks that reinstatement which is assured to such returning prodigals by the promises of the Gospel. In confidence that this supplication, so divinely authorised, will not be ineffectual, a concluding petition is offered up for all, that “they may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of God’s holy name:” in other words, that every member of the congregation, who has either retained, or recovered the saving grace of God, may so faithfully and perseveringly exercise it in the three great branches of Christian duty, to God, his neighbour, and himself, as uniformly to render himself (in the language of St. Paul) “well pleasing to God, and acceptable to men.”

I conceive enough has now been said to dispel all reasonable doubt of what the Church of England maintains respecting the infallible communication to infants of baptismal grace; its loss by deadly sin; and its possible recovery by repentance and conversion. I do not, for the present, ask on what ground these principles have been adopted. I speak to Church-of-England men whose object it is to ascertain *what* the formularies of that church have taught them to believe. There are, however, several practical consequences flowing so necessarily from the doctrinal views now stated, and bearing so directly on the religious welfare of each individual, that, were they not, however briefly, adverted to, the subject itself would have been brought forward to little, if any, valuable purpose.

In the first place, then, I would venture to observe, that the whole body of our public devotions, when attentively considered in the light of those first principles, will be found to speak a much more definite, and, at the same time, an incomparably weightier language, than is found in them by those who have overlooked this standard of interpretation.

For, if it was the entire belief of those who prepared our devotional formularies, that every faithful Christian possesses inward grace; which, in its essence, implies a love of God above all, and an habitual freedom from all such sins as would extinguish that love, as well as from all dispositions and tempers inconsistent with that love; then, necessarily, the spirit of the devotion would uniformly accord with this principle. The matter of those formularies would, by consequence, uniformly refer, either to the substance, the advance, the confirmation,—or, on the other hand, to the difficulties, the dangers, and the too possible declensions,—of that inward life, which, in the view of the compilers, would appear to demand the supreme care of teachers, and the deepest solicitude of every individual Christian. Let, then, the explanatory key, which is thus afforded, be actually applied to the stated prayers of the Church, and it will be seen at once, that scarcely a petition is offered, which does not recognise the state of grace, guard its substance, watch its stability, pursue its advancement, aspire to its maturity; or, on the other hand, deprecate the state of sin, dread its return, resist its remains, shun its every possible approach, and seek, above all things, its complete subjugation.

This character will be found so strictly to belong to all our more ancient and original Collects, as to make them liable to the charge of inflatedness and hyperbole, when explained in any less exalted, or less definite meaning. When, for example, they pronounce God's service to be perfect freedom; when they ask, each morning, that, during the day, there may be no fall into sin, no running into any kind of danger; when the blessings statedly implored, are, a peace which the world cannot give; a

heart set to obey God's commandments; such a love of what God commands, and such a desire of what he promises, as will fix the heart *there*, where true joys are to be found; a love of God above all, poured into the heart from above; a pardon which cleanses from all sin; a peace which serves God with a quiet mind; an influence of the Holy Spirit which gives a right judgment in all things, and a constant joy in his holy comfort; a mind and heart which, as it were, ascend to heaven, and there continually dwell with Christ; a heart so cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as perfectly to love God, and worthily to magnify his holy name:—when, I say, such are the objects which are continually placed before us, as right to be asked, as reasonable to be expected, and as simply constituting the ordinary inheritance of the Christian; how could we understand these elevated aims, if no state of mind were reckoned upon which implied their realisation? If they were always to be in prospect, and never attained, would it be possible to avert the charge of illusion from even our most admired and venerated forms? The expressions are so descriptive of real human feelings, and give such vivid representations of moral elevation and mental happiness, that if, after all, they had no fulfilment, and were but an unsubstantial, though bright vision, could it be denied, that the whole Church of England service was as palpable a deception as was ever, in any instance, imposed upon human credulity?

It might not be difficult to prove, that this would be but a natural deduction from the reasonings of some, who, in their zeal for baptismal regeneration, have paralysed the truth for which they contended, by never once mentioning that state of grace which is lost by deadly sin; and, on the contrary, by degrading the state of salvation, which our Catechism maintains, into a state of salvability, common to the pious and the profligate. As the scheme of these divines includes no standard by which the *power* of godliness may be distinguished from its mere *form*, and as it draws no discernible line between the spiritually living and the spiritually dead, . . . as far as the

influence of those persons extends, the blessings, implored in our prayers, are evidently not so much as pretended to. They are verbally recognised; but, in point of fact, they have become obsolete; not actually annulled, but as really in abeyance, as titles which have not found a claimant.

But this strange anomaly ceases, when once attention is given to the real doctrine of our Church, respecting the grace of baptism. The state of salvation which this grace confers, and which, in the adult Christian, whether retained or recovered, implies habitual victory over all gross and deadly temptations, is, itself, in its lowest notion, the vital germ and virtual compendium of all those exalted attainments. The reality, therefore, of such a state of mind and heart as implies exemption from all presumptuous sin, once admitted, the spiritual blessings, implored in our Collects, become as likely and as congenial, as, before, they appeared improbable and unsuitable. He who is conscious of habitually overcoming all rebellious movements of his nature, through the power of divine grace, has a pledge in his own bosom for the sure eventual attainment of every further blessing which our Lord has promised to his faithful people. The highest blessing which he is taught to ask from God differs in degree and circumstance only, not in substance or nature, from what he already consciously possesses. He learns, from the state of grace itself, from the frame of heart which it implies, the strength which it brings, and the protection which it affords, that, in order to reach the utmost objects of its spiritual ambition, he need only grow in grace, and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour.

Another most important light, in which the distinction maintained by the Church of England, between the state of grace and the state of sin, may be regarded, is that of a sure and simple standard for self-examination.

Of all possible questions which a human being can put to himself, the weightiest, beyond comparison, is, Whether he be at peace with God? If there were no sure criterion by which this inquiry might be satisfied, man, while a

sojourner on earth, would be of all creatures the most miserable. Most suitably, then, to man's natural wishes, and with wisest attention to his present and everlasting security, has the Church, at once, afforded such a criterion, and exercised the strictest care, that it should be, in every respect, sound and undelusive.

She has effected this purpose, by making the state of grace essentially to consist in habitual victory over all known and palpable sin, through the predominating influence of love to God above all things, sustained by earnest and unremitted prayer. In adopting this view, the Church of England has excluded fallacious speculation; and has subjected this momentous question to the same rules of practical common sense, which are relied upon in all the other important concerns of human life.

It is notorious, that, on this particular point, pious sincerity, when ignorant and impassioned, has become peculiarly perplexed and extravagant. With no subject, therefore, have religious adventurers been more occupied; and, in proportion to the offer of a briefer and more compendious method of setting the conscience at rest, has been, generally, the degree of popular attention and interest.

Where it has been thought expedient to combat these pretensions, the usual course, especially in latter years, has been, not so much to expose the fallacy of the specific proposition, as to charge with presumption the pursuit, on whatever ground, of such inward tranquillity. Man, it has been said, while in this lower world, is entitled to exercise only tremulous hope; and, in the exercise of his best endeavours, to commit himself to God's infinite mercy, and the merits of the Redeemer.

Had such theologians, however, examined more attentively the doctrines of that Church to which they generally belonged, they would have learned, that in the view of the formularies they had subscribed, they were resisting one error, by maintaining another; or rather, that they were correcting an abuse of truth, by radically rejecting the important and naturally interesting truth which was thus abused. A little sober reflection, distinct from church

authority, might have convinced them, that the temperate wisdom of the Church of England has provided a far better guard against all possible abuses, by, at once, maintaining a state of conscious peace with God, and defining the exclusive test, by which that state can be authenticated.

Doubtless the Church of England trusts, unreservedly, in the mercy of God, and in the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: but she trusts in them, not as substitutes for the effectual grace of Christ *within the soul*, but as a ground and pledge, that the promise of its communication will infallibly be verified. She, accordingly, rests confident, that, to all infants, brought to our Redeemer in obedience to his invitation, this grace will be gratuitously given; and that from none, who, after having lost this first grace, turn again, and sincerely implores it, will it ever be withheld.

Assuming, then, at once, the infallibility of the grant, and the efficacy of the grace when granted, the Church of England has deemed herself warranted to assert a sensible and matter-of-fact distinction, between those who have retained or recovered this grace, and those in whom it evidently appears to be wanting. In making, therefore, such a distinction, the Church holds out a rule, by which every individual becomes bound, by the very reason of the case, to examine his own state toward God; and the obligation is increased by this important circumstance, that the rule itself is as simple as it is solid,—that, depending on no doctrinal theory, excluding all visionary fancy, it rests on a matter of fact, respecting which, in all ordinary cases, honesty and common sense are sufficient to determine.

For, let it be observed, that we are not taught to account ourselves in a state of grace, because certain supposed truths of revelation have occupied our thoughts and engaged our confidence; nor because, at some particular time, we were conscious of extraordinary religious emotions, which seemed to mark a revolution in the inner man. Whatever, of this kind, individuals may have

really, or even beneficially, felt, the Church of England takes a surer, as well as more practical ground, by merely putting us on the inquiry, whether we *now* possess such a vital principle of Christian piety, as engages us, habitually, to resist the world, the flesh, and the devil ; and preserves us from all positive and palpable violations of the known law of God? In such a predominant disposition of mind and heart, and such an uniform habit of life, the Church of England makes the state of grace to consist ; because, nothing but the effectual grace of our Saviour Jesus Christ could thus raise fallen man above the frailty of his debilitated nature.

To propound such a rule, therefore, in a case where infinite happiness, or infinite misery, is the alternative, is virtually to enjoin its close and constant application on every individual who admits its conclusiveness. That the Church of England expects that it should be so applied, is evident, not only from the terms in which it is more immediately delivered, but, also, from the whole strain and tenour of her devotional forms. In every prayer which she puts into the mouths of her members, she supposes them, either substantially possessed of this blessing, and earnest for advancement to still higher degrees of grace ; or mourning under its conscious loss, and anxious for its recovery : or else, in a state of weakness and uncertainty, through partial declension, or oppressive temptation.

The general course of life is, doubtless, the first matter of examination to which we are called by this reiterated, but concurrent instruction. If acts of known sin meet us at our entrance on this review ; if we are conscious, that, in any instance, we are habitually led captive by appetite or passion, or by the corrupt maxims of the world ; in one sense, we need go no farther : the point is already decided against us ; we are living in deadly sin. For, so long as the grace of Christ lives and rules in the heart, in the very nature of things, no gross sin can be committed ; nor can any sin habitually predominate. If, therefore, any act of gross sin be committed, or if any sin whatever be habitually indulged or yielded to, there is either palpable

evidence of a state of sin, or no evidence of a state of grace.

But were it possible, that the closest examination could detect no outward transgression; still, according to our Church, we must look inward, and ascertain the conduct and character of our inward, no less than of our outward man. The mind, after all, is the great scene of action. We, there, in a moral sense, often do more in an hour, than outwardly in weeks or months. Circumstances restrain outward conduct. We seldom can exactly do the thing we would; decency, propriety, even selfish common sense, may supply externally the want of nobler motives: within, and there only, we are ourselves, we act wholly without disguise; and, therefore, in that interior region alone can we have certain evidence, that we have escaped deadly sin, and are still in the state of grace. Our Redeemer has himself instructed us, that sin of the grossest kind may, in a moral sense, be as really committed in the heart, as in the external conduct. And even if this oracle had not been delivered, common sense might have led us to the same conclusion: for, where no want of will, but mere impossibility, withholds, the moral turpitude is strictly the same.

But the significant language of the Church of England suggests a further necessity for inward self-inspection, on a point of at least equal moment, and certainly of deeper difficulty. The article already quoted, has this remarkable expression, that, after having received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin. Here, therefore, is implied, a previous state of evil, of a character essentially interior, and, perhaps, to be discerned by negative, rather than by any positive symptoms; namely, departure from grace given. This expression is obviously meant to indicate the root of the mischief. It marks a beginning which it was deeply wise to intimate; but of which, when intimated, our own reason instantly perceives the justness. There must be a failure in the internal disposition, before there can be a fault in the external conduct. It was only when Eve became per-

sueded, that the tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eye, and a thing to be desired to make one wise, that she put forth her hand, and took of the tree, and did eat. Can we, then, sufficiently estimate the importance of the lesson which is conveyed to us in this analytic statement of our decline and fall? It is tantamount to that admonition in the sacred word, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

We shall not meet the charitable purpose of our Church, if we do not examine what it is to depart from grace given. This inquiry leads us, not only into the deepest recesses of the heart, but, also, into those feelings of the spiritually regenerated mind, which, in the language of St. Paul, can be only spiritually discerned. We cannot know what it is to depart from grace, unless we first understand what grace is. But if we ourselves are competent to the inquiry, we need only open our Common Prayer, or recollect its daily forms, to discover, that grace, in our Church's notion of the term, is a divinely infused temper of mind, which fixes our affections on spiritual objects; which makes us feel those objects as realities; and thereby engages us in such a mental commerce and intercourse with the unseen world, as makes us superior to the fatal snares of earth, and inclines us not to indulge, but to mortify, our carnal appetites and passions.

If such be the nature of grace,—then, to depart from this grace, is to allow any abatement of this spiritual temper. If divine grace be prevalent, prayer will be continually resorted to, as that exercise of the mind in which spiritual objects are most nearly contemplated, and most affectionately apprehended; and vigilance against all those deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil, which would seduce the heart from heavenly objects and spiritual pursuits, will be unremittingly exercised. To neglect prayer, or to become cold in its exercise,—to be less jealous of the contagion of sin, or the force of temptation,—even to think with less interest on spiritual things, and with greater interest on earthly things,—to be less intent on growing in grace, and mortifying all evil and corrupt

affections, and on becoming more and more conformed to the great Exemplar and living head of the Church,—this is the commencement of departure from grace; and, as all habits, once begun, have a growing tendency, if the progress be not stopped by timely repentance, and a recovery of what is called in Holy Scripture “the first love,” the result is certain:—they who depart from grace will fall into that rebellion against God, which implies death spiritual; and, without timely conversion, will lead to death eternal.

What has been said may suffice to illustrate the necessity of that inward self-examination which our Church enjoins, in order to safety. It need hardly be added, that so to practise it, as to be habitually satisfied respecting our state toward God, is no less indispensable to our comfort.

If to apprehend departure, in any degree, from grace given, be matter of just alarm; to be reasonably assured that we have not departed from it, is the only stable ground of internal peace. But we can possess this assurance, only so long as we consciously exercise love to God above all things; regard sin as the greatest possible evil; implore constant supplies of grace from Him who is its living fountain; and avoid every situation and circumstance which could damp this spirit, or obstruct these pursuits. So long as we retain this frame of mind,—and no longer,—can we reasonably rejoice in the safety of our state; or be sure that we have, in no degree, declined from our Christian calling. The vigilance, self-denial, guard of temper, and attention to every known duty, which are essential to perseverance, and still more to progress, are evident from the nature of the case, and need not be enlarged upon. Did our stability in this arduous course depend on our own uniformity of caution, or of resolution, how desperate were our conflict, and how infallible our failure! But, what sustains hope is, simply and supremely, that it is a state of grace which we are called on to retain,—a state, the distinction of which consists in our being spiritually animated and inwardly

sustained by our ever-present God and Saviour ; if we only adhere to him with that honesty and truth of heart which no weakness need hinder ; and which we can lose the power of exerting, only by wilful neglect, and gratuitous yielding to temptation.

Still, however, it is not to be concluded, that the Church of England, in admonishing all to examine their state toward God, assumes, with certainty, that every upright man, without exception, will at once find in himself the evidences of spiritual life. The definite terms of which the Church makes use, imply, not only that this internal satisfaction should be sought, but that, wherever there is just ground, in the regular order of things, it will scarcely fail to be enjoyed. Exceptions to this general rule, however, are clearly allowed in the admission, already adverted to, that there may be weak-hearted Christians, who, though in some respects distinguishable from those who stand, are, nevertheless, by no means to be confounded with those who fall. The Church, in her tenderness, pities such characters, rather than blames them ; but, in asking comfort, as well as help for them, she intimates, that jealousy respecting their state toward God is one chief part of their weakness. Most certainly, therefore, she does not deem such jealousy a stamp of condemnation. The physical frailty of the human mind is often, of itself, sufficient so to becloud the spiritual state, as to make the sincerest self-inspection, the wisest suggestions of others, and even the most conscientious vigilance, unavailable for comfort. With such cases, therefore, all that can be done, is what the Church actually does : they can be brought only before Almighty God. He can comfort and help, whether the evil be physical or moral ; for, that it too often arises from moral causes, is not to be disputed. Omissions, inadvertencies, irregularities of temper and of tongue, dulness of spiritual feeling, and languor in devotion, must, even in the state of grace, be resisted with unremitting energy, else they will make lamentable inroads on both mind and conduct ; and though they may not proceed so far as to extinguish

the life of grace; or, though it may be some length of time before they produce that effect, they will blight its strength and darken its comfort. That no such cases ought to exist, is unquestionable: the prevalently cheerful language of the Church would imply, that, in her judgment, there is no necessity for such cases existing; still, their frequent recurrence must be reckoned upon; and the Church of England has learned from her all-gracious Master, neither to break the bruised reed, nor to quench the smoking flax;—expressions which would seem specifically to denote the two classes which we have been supposing: the bruised reed being a just emblem of the morbidly afflicted mind; while the smoking flax almost literally describes those in whom some better things may still remain, which yet are ready to die.

Although, therefore, the Church of England specifies the two states—of grace, and of deadly sin; and although, by her standard of distinction, she makes obligatory upon all, to try themselves by this unequivocal test, and not to rest satisfied until they are rationally certain of their spiritual safety; yet she exercises a charitable caution respecting those intermediate shades of character of which God alone can be a judge: and, while she distinctly instructs them what they ought to be, she endeavours to make them such, not by terrific denouncement, but by so praying for them, as both to teach and encourage them to pray for themselves; on the principle that, as far as truth and reason will permit, it is infinitely better to excite hope than despair; and to presume, that there is some remaining good to be exerted so long as the charity which hopeth all things, can, with any consistency, admit the supposition.

This last remark leads to the mention of a third result, which naturally arises from the doctrine of the Church of England respecting baptismal grace; namely, that teachers who adopt this sentiment will be led to address mixed congregations, in a different manner from those who consider all persons unregenerate who have not passed through a distinct and sensible conversion.

He who entertains this latter persuasion will necessarily regard the great mass of an ordinary congregation as in no respect better (however they may be worse) than actual and acknowledged heathens. He will reckon them, with the few exceptions which his principles can allow his charity to make, as dead in trespasses and sins ; unvisited, to the present moment, with any quickening influence from above. He will, therefore, deem it his first duty to urge upon them such topics as appear to him most conducive to awaken feeling in an insensible mind and heart. He will probably endeavour to convince them, that they are under positive condemnation and wrath, until, from a sense of spiritual danger, they explicitly believe in our Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of perishing sinners : he will be apt to state this process, as of universal necessity, on the ground that, until salvation be thus insured, all are alike sinners in the sight of God ; and he will, of course, exhort the great body of his hearers, as unreservedly as St. Peter exhorted the Jews on the day of Pentecost, to repent and be converted, that their sins may be blotted out.

The genuine Church-of-England teacher will be disposed, by his principles, to pursue a more discriminative method. He will overlook no truth which the sacred word enjoins him to enforce ; but, as he is certain that all who hear him were once in a state of grace ; and as he is uncertain how many of them may still retain some unextinguished portion of that primary gift, he will be inclined, in the first place, rather to call forth what is good, than to denounce what is evil. He will reserve expostulation and menace, until he has tried the effect of invitation and encouragement, in the hope of exciting whatever may yet remain of conscientious tenderness, or of pious sensibility. He will confine this expectation within no narrow limits ; because he will account those only positively graceless, of whom, on no rational ground, he can hold a more favourable opinion.

But it is to the young of his flock that he will look with peculiar interest, and more sanguine confidence. In

proportion to the probability of their having not yet strayed from the fold, it will be his delight, as well as his anxiety, to guard their innocence; and to co-operate with their heavenly Father, in leading them onward on the way of salvation. With this view he will dwell upon the paternal mind of God toward them; the grace which, having already visited them, is sure, in answer to their prayers, to flow forth upon them in still richer abundance: as also, the certain blessedness which awaits them, the sure enjoyment of an inward heaven here, as well as the assured prospects of an heaven of glory hereafter, if only, without hesitation or reserve, they obey that call, "My son, give me thy heart." A true divine of the Church of England will feel that, if he were not thus to carry the lambs of Christ's flock in his arms, he would both overlook the example of the chief Shepherd, and be wanting where the highest angels are employed as his assistants.

A Church-of-England teacher, therefore, will consider it as his vocation, to imitate the gentleness of our Redeemer, rather than the severity of the Baptist; and, in accordance with the entire tenour of our Lord's declarations, he will, primarily, represent God, not in the light of an angry sovereign, or avenging judge, but in that of an infinitely loving parent, to whom, at each moment, the heart which aspires to goodness, yet trembles under a sense of its own weakness, may have recourse, with unreserved affiance. That such filial access to God belongs to all who have, in any effectual measure, retained their first grace, follows necessarily from the relation which the Church of England believes to be established in baptism. But, may we not assert, that the true Church-of-England teacher will hence be inspired with a peculiar tenderness, even to those whose lapse is most indubitable? Will he not continually admonish them, that it is their father's house from whence they have strayed? and where he sees symptoms of sincere desire to regain the rest from which they had wandered, will he not delight to urge the case of the prodigal in the Gospel, as silencing every doubt, and solving every difficulty; as shewing, at once, the simplicity of the path,

and the infallible certainty of a prompt and gracious reception?

But while the Church-of-England teacher is gentle, where it can be hoped that gentleness will avail, he is not less preserved by his principles from saying, "Peace, peace, where there is no peace;" and from putting darkness for light, or light for darkness. The decisive standard which the Church of England has been shewn to afford to each individual for self-examination, becomes equally, and, if possible, still more imperatively, a rule for public instruction. If, as the Church of England teaches, there be indeed a state of grace, the marks of which are palpable, and the possession of which is the only means of peace with God and with ourselves here, and the only pledge of happiness hereafter; then, nothing under Heaven can be so much the duty of a Church-of-England teacher, as to dwell upon this state; to keep it continually in view; to shew its value; to unfold its advantages; to induce those who possess it to advance in it more and more; to urge those who possess it not, or who have no clear evidence of possessing it, to seek after it till they find it; to exhort all to examine themselves, whether they be indeed in this state of salvation; and whether they are to be reckoned among those who stand, those who are weak-hearted, or those who fall. The Church of England has given a weight to these topics, of which, consistently with her principles, it is impossible to deprive them; and so, not to give them the same strict proportion of weight in public teaching, is, not only to neglect the most obvious duty, but to violate the most solemn obligation.

According to the Church of England, the state of grace and the state of sin are strictly equivalent with spiritual life and spiritual death. The very terms, therefore, which are used, supersede all reasoning on their importance. These are points which never can become obsolete. Placed as they are by our Church, they comprehend the heart-pulse of Christian doctrine. They are the true and only centre, where all the moral interests of man can be radically secured; and from whence, alone, can proceed all the

varieties of moral excellence which exalt the individual, enrich society, spread comfort through this life, or qualify for life eternal.

If there be indeed a state of grace, the essence of which consists in loving God above all things; and to which, exclusively, belongs the power of avoiding sin, and resisting temptation,—then, to recommend any virtue, or to enforce any duty, without either expressing or implying the antecedent necessity of being in the state of grace, in order to effectual eschewing of evil, or doing of good, is to commence a superstructure without a foundation; or to expect a separated lifeless branch, to vegetate and fructify.

The genuine Church-of-England teacher, therefore, however ready to encourage, and however gentle in inviting, will, nevertheless, leave room for no fallacious conception respecting the state which alone brings present peace, and justifies hope for eternity. He will continually urge, that to attain this state, and advance in it, is essentially, that one thing which our Lord declared needful; and that the criterion given by our Church, of exemption from deadly sin, is so intelligible, and so practical, as to leave without excuse those who suffer one day to pass without using diligence, in the truest sense, to make their calling and election sure. In estimating individual cases, he will be as far from depressing the sincere, as he will be from flattering the presumptuous. But, with the tenderest care not to wound any upright mind, he will explicitly declare what may and ought to be possessed; and what, consequently, no individual Christian should rest without effectually and consciously possessing. Thus, therefore, the Church-of-England teacher will speak to the heart; there will be an energy, an unction, an interiority in his instructions, which will penetrate the inner man, and touch the master-springs of human nature; there will be a correspondence to innate feeling, which will interest the lowest and most illiterate; and there will be a truth of philosophy, with which the highest minds once inspired with a love of good will delight to be occupied. It is, in fact, the philosophy of our Redeemer, vital and simple, as

it proceeded from himself, that the Church of England, in concurrence with the Catholic Church in all ages, has embodied and enjoined.

When the Church represents the state of grace as the exclusive soil of genuine virtue, the only region of heartfelt peace and consolation, what is she, but the faithful reporter of that comprehensive oracle, "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things?" The enlightened minister of the Church of England will, therefore, feel that, in observing his special rule and in executing his peculiar trust, he is, in the simplest and most direct manner, echoing the voice of God manifest in the flesh; reflecting upon the minds of his hearers the uncoloured rays of the Sun of Righteousness.

After what has been already observed, much pains need not be taken to prove, that, while the Church-of-England teacher continually urges his hearers to examine their state toward God, and not to rest until they are assured of its soundness, he will suggest no fallacious rule of judging,—he will leave them to build on no precarious foundation. If spiritual safety is inseparable from a state of grace, which evinces itself by habitual exemption from all deadly sin, then spiritual consolation cannot be extracted from any kind of doctrinal belief, and need not be sought for from any illapsive communication. The state of salvation, which consists in victory over sin, must be discovered, not in doctrinal notions, nor in the strongest possible persuasion of external truth, but *in affections, tempers, and conduct*; and when these are accounted conclusive evidence, there will not be any wish to explore the records of heaven, in order to know whether a man's name is written in the book of life. The consciousness of moral effects, which omnipotent grace only could accomplish, will as much supersede supposed intimations from Heaven, as it will rise infinitely above the comfort which

the firmest and fullest persuasion of doctrinal truth could, of itself, possibly convey.

There is one other property of the true Church-of-England teacher, which will require some larger consideration. His views of a state of grace, of the evidence by which it is ascertained, and of the means by which it is preserved, will lead him to press upon his flock the necessity, not merely of habitually retaining, but of daily growing in grace, and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour.

If there be any who consider their everlasting salvation as unconditionally secured to them by our Saviour's death, and, consequently, as in no respect affected by the moral character of their own mind and heart, such possibly may enjoy a kind of mental comfort, independently of inward grace and habitual rectitude. But the Church of England so strictly identifies safety, as well as comfort, with the unequivocal possessions of what she calls the state of salvation, and which she represents as preserved through communicated grace, and guarded by constant prayer, as to make it imperative on her teachers to urge, not merely the faithful preservation, but the continual improvement of this state ; because, without constant efforts to improve, the state itself will not only be defective in point of evidence, but liable to be lost. For, not to aim at growth in grace, is, with moral certainty, to decline ; nor can the authentic properties of a state of grace be ascertained, except by their being kept in such lively exercise, as must imply advancement.

In a word, the doctrine of the Church of England respecting the state of grace keeps ever in view that comprehensive maxim in the Proverbs, "A good man is satisfied from himself." But this satisfaction essentially implies a consciousness of spiritual health ; and spiritual health is wholly incompatible with spiritual languor ; it can, in the nature of things, be enjoyed only so long as, with St. Paul, "We forget those things which are behind, and reach forward to those things which are before."

The teacher, therefore, who is impressed with these

views, will be solicitous to inspire his hearers, not only with conscientious vigilance, but with holy ambition. He will earnestly endeavour to convince them, that the state of grace is never to be stationary ; and that those “ deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil,” which tend to impede its progress, can never be too carefully avoided, or too completely surmounted. To this end, it will be his object to keep his hearers in constant and cordial remembrance, that it is their express vocation (according to the very terms of their baptismal initiation) not only to “ crucify the old man,” but “ utterly to abolish the whole body of sin.”

The Church-of-England teacher will be both animated and aided in this high and holy service, by the bright exemplifications of full-grown Christian piety which everywhere occur in the established forms of devotion. And, in proportion as he himself imbibes the spirit of what continually passes through his lips, the more energetic will be his statements, and the more glowing his representations, of all that essentially tends to ennoble human character, to enlarge and elevate the mind, to purify and delight the heart.

This assertion is not made gratuitously. Its verification will be more or less found in every pious writer whose own mind and heart have been trained and moulded effectually (and, I must add, as to every vital principle, exclusively) within the sanctuary of the Established Church. It is, among moderns, the high distinction of this invaluable class, that Christian virtue, in *their* delineation, exhibits a graceful dignity, a mellowed maturity, a delicacy of character, and an effulgence of aspect, which are felt, even on natural principles, to be inexpressibly venerable and lovely. That, in this instance, they are the truest followers of the scriptural archetype, might possibly not be difficult to shew. But what cannot be questioned, is that even the most upright and zealous of other denominations have been so far from presenting the same cheerful and luminous views, that, with the exception of a few individuals, they have uniformly described the most

faithful Christian course as beset with depressing difficulties to the very end of life ; as uncertain in its comfort, and certain only in its unceasing warfare, and eventual deliverance. With these honest followers of St. John the Baptist (may we not say ?), rather than of the Redeemer, the conflict between mind and flesh, in the 7th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, has been taken as the standard whereby the Christian is to measure his attainments and his prospects while a sojourner below.

The true Church-of-England teachers have, on the contrary, no less explicitly maintained, that as the work of righteousness is peace, so the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance for ever ; that inward corruption may, through the divine blessing on patient continuance in well-doing, be so effectually subdued, as to verify that promise in the evangelic prophet, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is staid on thee ;” and that St. John’s “perfect love,” which casteth out fear, is no illusive hope, but an attainment, with which wise and indefatigable pursuit is sure to be compensated.

Perhaps it may not, at first sight, be apparent in what way the doctrine of our Church respecting baptismal grace tends to give these brighter and more exalted ideas of the Christian course. But a little consideration will shew, that settled comfort and high advancement in religion, are as reasonably to be expected, where retention of early grace has kept the faculties unabused, the conscience tender, the imagination unsullied, and the heart pure ; as, on the other hand, fierce inward conflicts, fluctuating frames of mind, and an imperfect victory over corruption, are but too natural, where evil habits had become established before the heart yielded to the influences of religion.

It is not pretended that this rule holds universally. The youthful votary may forfeit his advantages, by yielding to those temptations from which no child of Adam can be wholly exempt ; and the adult convert may surmount his disadvantages, by his cordiality of concurrence with divine grace, and his affectionate zeal in improving it. But experience has shewn such cases to be exceptions

only to a general law of moral nature. It will still be a matter of natural consequence, that the path should be pleasanter, and the progress greater, where evil habits are merely to be guarded against, than where they are to be subdued and expelled; and that the same capacities and tastes which, after having been abused, are ever ready to betray,—when kept pure from the beginning, will serve as aids to goodness, and instruments of happiness.

The same sacred writer who has said, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,” has described “the path of the just to be as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” That, in the application of this beautiful image, the sacred writer supposes an effectual compliance with that important precept, appears from the entire strain of the discourse with which the Book of Proverbs commences. The object is to guard and regulate the youthful mind: and it is to him who yields to this early discipline, that a tranquil and happy life is insured; it is to such an one, that wisdom’s ways are to be ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace.

It would be unreasonable to suppose these truths more firmly founded under the law, than they are under the Gospel. But, is not such a thought precluded by those memorable words of our Redeemer, which have been already more than once adverted to: “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God?” Is it not here implied, that our Saviour not only admits little children into his mystical kingdom, but considers them as fitted to be subjects of it with some peculiar advantage? Can less than this be concluded, from the emphatic language which our Lord employs; and which, whatever further truth it may intimate, cannot be denied to have literal reference to infants? since, otherwise, it would not have served to account for the special graciousness with which the little children, then brought to him, were about to be received.

From these words, therefore, and this act of our Redeemer, must we not infer a settled solicitude, that,

under the Gospel dispensation, children should, from their earliest years, be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? And would not the turn of his expression seem to imply, that he entertained this desire, not merely from that divine philanthropy which actuated all he did and said; but, also, from his knowledge, that persons thus trained from infancy would be more capable of imbibing the entire and unmixed spirit of the Gospel, and, consequently, of eminently exemplifying the complete character of Christ's spiritual subjects?

If this be granted, it will follow that, in the judgment of our Redeemer, adult converts, though infinitely provided for by his grace, and inexpressibly the objects of his mercy, were, notwithstanding, inadequate to substantiate all the sublime purposes of his mystical kingdom; and that, to realise the extent of his design, he deemed it necessary to have, not only naturalised, but also native subjects; not only such as should be his, by the sincerest attachment which a once alienated heart could feel, and a sense of infinite mercy might excite, but such as should be bound to him by a devotedness coeval with conscious thought; growing with their growth, strengthening with their strength, involving every habit of their mind, every feeling of their heart, and every movement of their nature.

If it be allowable to exercise our thoughts on the probable reason for this special estimation of infant discipleship, would they not seem almost to press upon us in the defects ordinarily inseparable from the subjects of adult conversion? Where habits of sin have once been established, even the real predominance of divine grace will not necessarily imply pacification of the mind and heart: the appetites which were pampered, the passions which were yielded to, the irritable temper, the unbridled tongue, though they have ceased to rule, may long continue to torment; and to be as it were, watching the first inadvertent moment, in order to regain their former dominion. In this case the integrity which preserves safety will not, therefore produce tranquillity. The inner man is like a

besieged town, where pressure of danger leaves no room even for the hope of quiet enjoyment.

But, in addition to these home-bred evils, the adult convert is too likely to view religion itself in such a light, as to be little less depressed by it, in one point of view, than he is comforted in another. We learn from our Redeemer himself, that as he has infinite attractions for minds which can feel their force, so he has inexpressible terrors for those who require to be subdued : that, to the latter, he is more terrible than Jonah to the Ninevites ; to the former, more engaging than Solomon to the Queen of the South. The case of the adult convert implies, almost of necessity, a deep apprehension of the terrors, and scarcely a capacity for feeling the attractions. His mind is occupied with his own need of deliverance from apprehended wrath and impending destruction ; and, to him, our Redeemer is interesting, not so much because he is the Sun of Righteousness, as because, for his sake, the most guilty may hope for forgiveness. Even the consolation, therefore, that such a one derives from the Gospel, has no necessary connexion with its internal excellencies. These may remain unknown and unsuspected, at the very time when those negative, or, at least, lower blessings, with the need of which the adult convert had been predominantly impressed, are sincerely felt and gratefully acknowledged. The satisfaction, therefore, which, in this case, even a confidence of safety affords, is not absolute, but relative. The alarming views which first opened on the mind of the adult convert, are, with respect to himself, no longer a matter of terror. But the sources of dread appear, in themselves, the same as before. In the state of mind with which his religious life commenced, he had felt as a wanderer on the open plain amidst a fearful storm. He has now the comfort of what he deems a secure shelter : but, abroad, he seems to himself to hear the tempest raging as violently as ever.

Although, therefore, the adult convert may very soon possess personal consolation, his entire apprehension of the divine economy will not produce cheerfulness. The

dark and dreadful ideas which could not but arise in a morally depraved mind, on its first serious attention to religion; and which fitly arose,—as, with respect to such a mind, founded in truth, as well as necessary, in the natural order of things, to subdue that depravity;—those ideas, the adult convert will naturally continue to identify with the substance of evangelical religion; and the consequence will be, that, whether he meditates within himself, or imparts his thoughts to others, his views of religion, though safe as to himself, and involving the substance of essential truth, will, nevertheless, be sombre and uninviting. They will belong to that species of religious institution, which our Lord compared to mourning and weeping, rather than to that which he illustrated by the figure of piping and dancing.

It cannot be necessary to shew more at large, that, however solidly qualified the adult convert may be, for being employed, by Divine Providence, as the “salt of the earth,” (that which, by its poignancy, excites the antecedently inert and sterile soil of the human heart,) he is very imperfectly prepared for serving as the light of the world,—(that which, by its beauty, its hilarity, and its sublimity, captivates even natural taste; and interests not only all the moral, but all the pleasurable sensibilities of the mind, and of the heart). But a still more serious deficiency is too likely to arise from the limited nature of the motives by which adult converts, in the crisis of their change, are generally actuated. Fleeing from an evil, rather than pursuing a good; urged by a propulsive, instead of being drawn by an attractive power, they are anxious for security, rather than for happiness; they are intent on that which will avert infinite calamity; and, at best, only secondarily concerned for that which will confer infinite felicity. In such a case, therefore, there can be little doubt, but that faithful efforts will be made to pass the boundary which is thought to separate the state of safety from the state of danger; but can it be reckoned on, with like certainty, that, when the boundary is supposed to have been passed, there will be equally intense

exertion to leave first principles, and proceed onward toward perfection? It is the essential nature of propulsive motives to act most powerfully in the first instance; but to lose their force in proportion as they answer their purpose. Now, it is not denied to be possible, that the adult convert may so happily avail himself of the propulsion, which he feels in his commencement, as to be carried forward into the attractive sphere of pure spiritual good. But where this (it may be feared too rare) felicity does not occur, can much more be expected than that the adult will persevere in preserving the safety, which he conceives he has attained? that he will watch against all those enemies, which might again betray him into the danger from which he has emerged? but that, generally speaking (except so far as Divine Providence may be pleased to rouse him onward, by afflictive discipline), he will rest contented with his low attainments; and may, perhaps, suppose, that he would dishonour his Saviour, should he seek to be more amply "satisfied from himself?"

That the adult convert may possess certain special advantages, is readily granted. He becomes acquainted with the disenthraling power, and healing influence, of divine grace, to a degree, and in a manner, scarcely to be conceived by such as had never experienced the bondage and the malady of predominant corruption. Our Lord himself has been pleased to illustrate this fact, in the equally instructive and beautiful parable of the prodigal. It may also be allowed, that, where the adult convert so improves his deliverance from the state of sin as to apply himself, with persevering zeal, to the pursuit of pure and positive good, his recollection of the mental distress which he has felt, and the abyss from which he has been rescued, will give a heightening, not only to the spiritual consolations which he enjoys, while on earth, but, probably, even to the pleasures "which are at God's right hand for evermore."

The recorded instances, however, of adult converts, who have manifested remarkable solicitude to come within the strictly attractive influences of the Gospel, are, com-

paratively, so few, that, if there were no other witnesses to be appealed to, the disproportion between the evangelic provision and the effects produced by it would be inexplicable. When the bright prospects, held out by our Lord and his apostles, were contemplated, on the one hand; and the almost concurrent tones of complaint or depression, from the most distinguished subjects of adult conversion, were heard, on the other,—what sentiment could more naturally be conceived, than that which was uttered by one of the wisest and worthiest modern teachers of the class of which we speak: “We may do all this, (that is, all that he judged fitted to promote evangelic rectitude, in mind and heart,) and yet our comparative want of success, in begetting and educating the sons of glory, may demonstrate to us, that there is some more effectual way?”

But can, indeed, that way remain unknown, after so many ages of divine illumination? Rather is it not distinctly intimated, in our Redeemer’s signal predilection for infant votaries? The import of his words, on that memorable occasion, has already been noticed; but the more we view the entire transaction in the light of subsequent events, the more cause shall we discover for admiring and adoring that wisdom, which, in its highest purposes, seems to make closest alliance with the settled principles of human nature. Thus, as Abraham was preferred to the rest of mankind, because it was foreknown that he would command his children, and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord; so, when, in the fulness of time, the scheme of beneficence, which was begun in Abraham, was to be extended to the world at large, we perceive exactly the same solicitude, as in the former case, for infant initiation. Need we ask the reason of this remarkable uniformity in the divine conduct? Because, in this way, alone, could the whole of human nature be brought under the influence of heaven; and because, under the Gospel, those, alone, who were effectually brought up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” could fully resemble Him, who had increased in

wisdom as in stature, and in favour with God and man : in a word, because, in the nature of things, none others could be equally qualified to fulfil the higher purposes, or imbibe the purer influences, of the Gospel dispensation.

It is, in the first place, a matter of immense advantage, that the choice of religion should be antecedent to every other choice, so that no pre-occupying rival should ever after dispute with it the throne of the heart. Throughout the whole of life, the first habits are the deepest. To this law of nature, we owe the existence of those filial and fraternal charities whence all the social virtues originate and take their tone : with these, the love of God, infinitely the highest of all the charities, should, at least, be coeval in time, in order that it be supreme in ascendancy. Happily, through the tender mercies of our God, the too general disregard of this law of nature has been kept within the remedial power of divine grace ; but, wherever it is disregarded, advantages are lost, for which, it is obvious, no subsequent re-adjustment can perfectly compensate.

It is, also, of no small moment, that the transcendent loveliness of religion should be unimpaired to the mind by any mixture of terrific, or otherwise revolting ideas. This mixture must ordinarily, more or less, exist in adult converts. The deepest dread, and the most alarming apprehensions, are scarcely separable from the first awakenings of a depraved mind and callous conscience. But he who has never rebelled against his God is not liable to the dismay involved in a “fearful looking for of judgment;” nor can he know by experience the tortures of a self-accusing spirit. His awe of God will, doubtless, be profound ; his fear of incurring divine vengeance may be unutterable. But he differs from the adult convert in this material respect, that there is no torment in his fear, so long as he preserves his integrity ; whereas the adult convert must be the victim of tormenting fear, until he thinks he has some evidence that divine wrath is averted. The fear of the youthful votary is so far from lessening inward satisfaction, that it is cherished as, at once, the means

and the pledge of safety. The fear, on the contrary, with which adult conversion generally commences, would be more than human nature could support, if dawning rectitude did not bring with it some glimmering of hope, to allay the darkness which it is yet insufficient to dispel.

Thus, while the adult convert usually commences his course in the depth of mental gloom ; and often slowly, and sometimes, after all, imperfectly emerges ; the youthful disciple begins in light, and is not liable to darkness ; except his mind should become clouded by error, or his heart, in some degree, seduced by temptation. Instead, therefore, of being, in the first instance, occupied with such views of the Gospel as are thought fittest to relieve the mind from apprehensions of incumbent wrath, or impending destruction, he is supremely engaged with those representations which invite to happiness, and those provisions which, faithfully improved, ensure its attainment. He, accordingly, sees nothing to sadden, but every thing to cheer and animate his heart. He is fully aware of the evils which await him, should he swerve from the path of rectitude ; but he is still more sensibly impressed with the blessings he already possesses, and the yet greater blessings which he sees before him. He does not dream of advancing without exertion : he knows that he must “ keep his heart with all due diligence ;” and even, occasionally, “ endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” But he is richly compensated, not only by the consciousness of having cordially and spontaneously chosen the better part, and by his power, through divine grace, of keeping himself so that the wicked one touches him not, but, also, by the indescribable union of natural with divine enjoyment, which must exist where every religious idea is replete with cheerfulness, and every mental association is imbued with religion.

In this case, therefore, and may we not add, as a general truth, in such a case only, does the aspect of practical Christianity shew itself as it really is ; that is, infinitely attractive, and essentially delightful. To such a mind, it will appear, not only as the means of everlasting safety, but

as the source of the truest and most exalted pleasures which can be enjoyed on earth ; as that which offers to the unvitiated imagination treasures of the sublime, the beautiful, and the admirable, which no range of thought could anywhere else discover, or, of itself, so much as imagine ; and, far more than this, as an object so fitted to engage and occupy the deepest and tenderest affections of the heart, as to make it consciously and ineffably be felt, as the very home of the soul, the element in which, in the most excellent sense, the spirit of man was made to “ live, and move, and have its being.”

Amidst such views and feelings, there would, even on natural principles, be little liability, either to vacillate, or linger ; and we may add, that, as it was observed respecting the propulsive power of apprehended evil that it diminishes, so it may as truly be said of the attractive power of good, that it increases in proportion to advancement. The continued progress, therefore, of the youthful votary, is as morally certain as the cloudless tranquillity of his path. As he seeks, not only good, but perfect gifts from the Father of lights, and as he, more and more, finds those gifts to be like the source from which they come, without variableness, or even shadow of turning, there is no intermingled circumstance to blunt his relish, no boundary to terminate his progress. To his winged spirit, death itself can scarcely seem to interrupt a course which has already been as a heaven upon earth ; and the endless continuance, and increasing bliss of which, is, itself, to constitute the heaven of heaven.

Such, then, being the advantage of having the softness of human nature bent and fashioned by the nurture of Christianity, instead of the indurated mind being broken by its force ; can we be in any danger of placing undue value on a scheme of Providence, which, in an age of unusual religious activity seems almost exclusively to correspond to the one highest and noblest Christian purpose ? That few are availing themselves of this provision, that its true value is overlooked, not only by its enemies, but by its professing friends, does not alter the

intrinsic truth of the case ; cannot invalidate the recorded and authenticated evidences, already afforded, of its unrivalled tendency ; nor shake the probability, that the fulness of its efficacy is reserved for a more advanced state of society, and a brighter period of our Lord's mystical kingdom.

The facts which cannot be confuted, are, that the Church of England, in her view of the baptismal regeneration of infants, understood as she herself has explained it, lays such a foundation for an entire life of religion ; for a choice of it, from joyful preference, rather than relentless necessity ; for continued culture of its noblest principles ; for unbroken and unalloyed enjoyment of its purest and deepest pleasures ; and for growing attainment of its amplest benefits and richest blessings, as, it may be confidently asserted, cannot yet be paralleled in the Christian world. And further, that, notwithstanding the inadequate justice hitherto done to this peculiar feature of our establishment ; notwithstanding the comparatively low and limited degree in which this providential talent has been improved, or even exhibited, it will be found, on examination, (an examination which, if made with discernment, may be challenged without fear,) that, to the influence of this doctrine, of the early grace which it has been the means of sustaining, and of the liberal and unclouded ideas and habits which it infused, we owe by far the most, and perhaps, indirectly, all the modern representations which we as yet possess, of healthful, dignified, serene, mature, and substantially joyful piety.

Will it be asked, in what manner the doctrine of the Church of England, respecting baptismal grace, tends to these exalted views ? Is it not obvious, that if such an early initiation into the spiritual discipline of the Gospel, be, indeed, a part of the divine economy, this initiation, when retained and improved, will, in the nature of things, imply a more radical engrafture, and more entire coalescence of the whole man, into the scheme and spirit of the Gospel, than could be reckoned upon from any converting process, at a subsequent season of life ? The plan of

redemption evidently does not violate, but consult, the laws of human nature. Although, therefore, it effectually provides for the conquest of the very worst mental and moral habits, it does not ordinarily extirpate them, as if they had never been. On the contrary, it leaves much to be done by the convert himself, toward maturing that rectitude of heart and life, the reinstatement of which, in principle and ruling tendency, constitutes true conversion. It is accordingly intimated, on every occasion in the New Testament, that to turn from a sinful to a religious course of life, is a business of difficulty, exertion, and the severest self-denial. It is described by Him, who best knew what was in man, as sometimes involving abnegations equivalent to cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye: and we find St. Paul inculcating on those very persons, the reality of whose spiritual life he had just before, not only emphatically, but sublimely asserted,—that their former propensities must be surmounted by continued mortification.

To adult converts, therefore, however firm of purpose, and upright in heart, the paths of religion can hardly be, in the first instance, ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace. Their conflicts, on the contrary, are likely to be long, as well as painful; and it might be feared, that a religious life, thus circumstanced in its commencement and progress, though not destitute of consolations, nor devoid of solid inward peace, should nevertheless retain, perhaps to the end, a deep intermixture of awful apprehensions, and gloomy associations; since these not only attended the first steps of the amended course, but were themselves predominant motives in producing that amendment.

We may, perhaps, go still farther, and assert, that all the sterner features of the Gospel have special reference to the case of adults; who, when once habituated to evil, could not be subdued without terrific denouncements, nor kept upright without rigid discipline. Those denouncements, therefore, and that discipline, when seen in their true light, can no otherwise be regarded, than

as expressions of the tender mercy of God, who would not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Still, it is not less true, that these supplementary expedients, of which the Gospel makes use, must, within the sphere of their influence, comparatively becloud the essential glories and beauties, of which the Gospel intrinsically consists; and that, on the whole, it is impossible that the mind which is thus wrought upon, though infinitely compensated in its way, and in its end, for all the terrors which it feels, and all the severities which it undergoes, should contemplate the Gospel scheme with that unmingled pleasure, embrace it with that pure complacency, or pursue its objects with that alacrity and intensity, which would be the natural and necessary result of a yet practically unvitiated mind and heart receiving, in all its tenderness and freshness, the purely attractive influences of the everlasting Gospel; the light of the glory of God, unimpaired and unclouded, in the face of Jesus Christ.

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